

Marxism *Today*

October 84

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U.S. Elections, Hong Kong, Running
With
Special supplement
'Left Alive' programme
Interviews with Pat Phoenix, Tony Booth
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The Face of Labour's Future:

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● APPEAL OF REAGANISM

What if anything stands between Ronald Reagan and another four-year term as American president? The answer, for his opponents, is depressingly little. As the campaign got officially underway on Labour Day, at the beginning of September, Walter Mondale, the Democratic candidate, was anywhere from 15-20% behind Reagan in the opinion polls. Reagan's lead reflected daunting advantages: he is President, the economy is booming and he has been able to claim, until now, to have avoided foreign crises.

Those three things should be more than enough to re-elect a president in a normal year. And by recent American standards – assassination, Vietnam, Watergate – there is not much unusual about this election. Registered Democrats outnumber Republicans. But that tends to help Democrats running for state or local office lower down the ticket. For President, Democratic voters will often desert their party – as they did in droves when voting against Jimmy Carter in 1980.

Had Mondale electricity of his own, he might go some way to overcoming these handicaps. But he is, at best, a likeable rather than an exciting campaigner, with more wit than humour, and a nasal Minnesota twang to his voice that rocks audiences to sleep. His one chance of bringing his campaign alive is to savage the President and expose his follies. But Mondale by temperament is too easy-going for a national politician: his big breaks – as Minnesota's attorney general, as Senator from that state and as Carter's Vice-President – were a patron's gift not his own hard-won prize. Attacking Reagan is something he finds unusually difficult to do.

Gloomy Democrats have looked for hope elsewhere. In Mondale's running mate, Geraldine Ferraro, for example. It was right, if overdue, to pick a woman candidate. But, unfortunately, vice-presidential contenders tend to have no impact or a bad one on the main candidates' chances. Ferraro is a sharp campaigner who doesn't duck a fight. A Roman Catholic, she reproved anti-abortionists (with whom she disagrees) for not applying Christian standards, for example to Republican attitudes to the poor. Yet her husband's business dealings are controversial, which is perhaps inevitable for a New York property developer.

Another straw for Democrats to grasp at is the black vote. There are 18m American blacks of voting age, of whom about 11m are thought to be registered to vote in this election. Not surprisingly, they prefer Mondale to Reagan by almost 90% to 5%. There



are 11 states, mostly in the South and North-East, where the black vote is larger than Reagan's 1980 winning margins in these states. The question is: will black voters turn out at the polls on November 6, election day? They will, but probably not in enough numbers to make a telling difference. Democrats have hopes for the rapidly growing Latino vote, especially in California, the state with the largest number of electoral votes (47) and in Texas (29). But registering Latino voters can be difficult. And although, like blacks, Latinos are as a rule Democrats, a surprising number voted for Reagan in 1980. In Texas, California and Florida, there are signs of class-based voting among Latinos, as the better-off and more suburbanised vote Republican.

The youth vote? In his campaign for the Democratic nomination, Gary Hart tried, mistakenly, to play up his youth and Reagan's age. There are almost as many Americans 65 or over (27m) as 18-24 year-olds (30m), and the old tend to vote more regularly. Besides, Reagan seems to be popular among young white males. His weakness is the 'gender gap': he does less well among women voters than among men. Conscious of Reagan's cold-war reputation, the White House has done all it can to present him as a reliable statesman, dedicated to peace. Whatever the facts, they have partly succeeded. The American anti-nuclear movement is in a temporary trough and the administration has skilfully managed to pin much of the blame for the breakdown of arms control talks on the Russians.

That the economic boom cannot last is little help to the Democrats. The end will not be long before election day. By buying

dollars, foreigners are financing federal government deficits of more than \$200 billion a year. America's trade deficit is expected to be more than \$150 billion this year. Industrial production did increase fast when the recession ended in late 1982, but from such a low point that factories are still at little more than 80% capacity – no better than average for the past 10 years. Some Democrats, resigned to defeat, try to find comfort in these economic numbers: let Reagan in his second term take the blame for the crash to come. The snag is an early deep recession is not inevitable. And against Reagan's hybrid Keynesian-supply side economics (a heavy rearmament programme and government deficits coupled with business-slanted tax cuts), the Democrats have no coherent, or indeed truly distinctive, economic strategy of their own.

This must be mystifying, and disheartening, to Europeans who ridiculed Reagan and thought he could not last: either his amateurism or his extremism must surely trip him up before long. Fond hope. Reagan is a politician of enormous charm and luck, teflon-coated in his near-immunity to criticism.

Unfortunately for those who would like to see a very different America, there is more to Reaganism than Reagan. His right-wing populism has wide appeal. After the 1960s and 1970s, when real wages, union strength and social spending advanced, a certain brand of free market capitalism is enjoying a fierce revival. There are, of course, hidden subsidies and trade protection for the biggest industries. But small investors from America's broad middle class, which delights in the capitalist ethic, are happy, too. In foreign policy, Reagan has continued a

muscular reassertion of American power, by means of rearmament and the dollar. This was begun under Carter's Democrats and consented to by a Democratic House of Representatives, but Reagan has deepened it and added his own cold-war rhetorical flair.

For precedents one has to think of Truman (without the Korean war) and Eisenhower (without recession). To an America regretful for past glories, after almost 20 years of uninterrupted bad news, this is a powerful combination. The Democrats sense defeat. They do not even expect to win back control of the Senate – from where they might act as a restraint on the President in foreign policy. But as they lack a slogan to roar back at Reagan – let alone a strategy – it is hard to feel sympathy for them or for their amiably ineffective candidate.

Paul Fox

● STREET ILLEGAL

Recent proposals by the Criminal Law Revision Committee to amend the law surrounding street prostitution fall far short of tackling the real problem of finding an acceptable way of keeping prostitution off the streets. The proposals are made in an interim report on street offences requested by the Home Office in advance of a full report into sexual offences and prostitution. The CLRC takes note of 'the widespread public concern' about kerb crawling and has produced a package of recommendations aimed at the visible nuisance of street prostitution rather than the underlying social, economic and political reasons for it. The committee it seems, is more concerned to make placatory gestures to stem the rising tide of moral comment surrounding the debate on street prostitution. It fails to remedy the injustices of the present legal arrangements, opens the door for a further ominous widening of police powers and fails to find effective remedies for the real problems experienced by communities in areas of sexual commerce.

Among its recommendations the CLRC proposes to create three new offences aimed at deterring men from accosting women in the street. In effect they are: persistently soliciting a prostitute in the street on foot; soliciting a prostitute in the street from a car; and soliciting any woman in such a way as to put her in fear. The committee is careful to exercise 'great caution' in defining the offence and essentially steers a very tentative course through some of the undoubted minefields that litter the whole area. It is this timidity which renders the measures proposed so inadequate to meet the legitimate

demands of women for protection from sexual harassment in the street or to really redress the balance of injustice by recognising in law that part of the public nuisance that is created by prostitution is caused by men accosting women.

This timidity is due in part to a profound confusion on the committee's part between what may be 'normal behaviour' of men towards women which they would not want to criminalise, and what constitutes a perversion of this normality within the behaviour surrounding prostitution. Men it seems 'frequently' accost women in the street and the committee must therefore be careful in devising any new criminal offence where none presently exists.

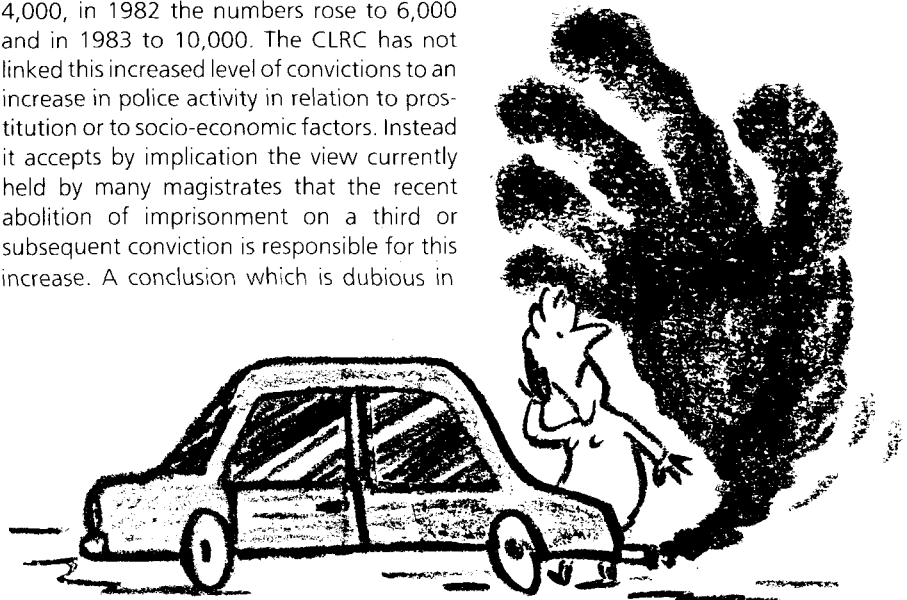
The result of this confusion about what may constitute legitimate behaviour is proposals that are limited and difficult to interpret. For a man to be guilty of soliciting a prostitute on foot, the prosecution must prove that there has been a degree of persistence. Under the first two offences proposed it would be extremely difficult for a conviction to be obtained if the woman approached were not a prostitute. For a man to be guilty of soliciting a non-prostitute woman for sexual purposes he must have done so in a manner likely to have put her in fear. The committee rejected the notion that it should be an offence for a man to accost a woman either on foot or from a car so as to cause her annoyance. It is greatly exercised to protect men from criminalisation by the 'undue susceptibility' of some women to fear.

The approach of the CLRC stems from concern about what the committee refers to as 'a new disturbing trend' – a sharp rise in convictions for prostitution in the last two years. Until 1981 convictions for loitering and soliciting remained steady at about 4,000, in 1982 the numbers rose to 6,000 and in 1983 to 10,000. The CLRC has not linked this increased level of convictions to an increase in police activity in relation to prostitution or to socio-economic factors. Instead it accepts by implication the view currently held by many magistrates that the recent abolition of imprisonment on a third or subsequent conviction is responsible for this increase. A conclusion which is dubious in

the extreme given the wealth of evidence indicating that imprisonment was never an effective disincentive to prostitution and that a large number of women re-offended within a week of leaving prison.

Equally, it flies in the face of the evidence that the only circumstance that can be said with any degree of certainty to arise from the abolition of imprisonment for soliciting is the sharp increase in the numbers of prostitutes imprisoned for fine defaulting. Recent figures from the National Association of Probation Officers indicate that if current trends continue, *more* prostitutes will go to prison this year. In the first quarter of 1984, 81 women were jailed for defaulting compared with 83 for the whole of 1982. Overall in 1982, 192 women were jailed for soliciting and fine defaulting. This number will be exceeded this year by sentences for defaulting alone. A statistic that is not surprising given recent figures from Sheffield which indicate that arrears in excess of £2,000 have been accumulated by some women, a reflection of the excessively punitive use of fines by magistrates at the present time.

The committee does not take account of recent research done by the London Borough of Camden which indicates that the overwhelming reason determining entry into prostitution is women's lack of educational and occupational opportunity, and that contemporary prostitution is a reflection of women's relative poverty. The research demonstrates that prostitute women are so stigmatised by prevalent moral attitudes (such as those motivating the proposals of the CLRC) that they occupy an 'outlaw status', prevented from access to existing social and welfare services by the attitudes and judgements of those they encounter as well as by their own internalised feelings of



being 'different' and low self-esteem. All these factors confine women in a damaging and destructive lifestyle and deny them any choice to leave it.

Camden Council Women's Committee also submitted evidence, after consultation with women in the borough, about the problems associated with prostitution in the community. It presented a package of measures which took account of the need to introduce new laws to protect women from sexual harassment in the street, but which also recognised the manner in which any extension of police powers in the street are susceptible to racist abuse. The Council suggests that existing legislation on noise and nuisance can be used to protect the rights of local residents and favoured the introduction of legislation to control kerb crawlers provided the charges were instigated by women themselves and not by the police. This was seen as a means to prevent the transformation of new legislation in this area into another *Sus* law.

Camden Council's proposals are a reasoned and progressive review of a universally complex problem. In locating the problem of prostitution as an expression of capitalist and sexual relations of power we have at least an accurate analysis with which to inform any practical measures undertaken. The CLRC's lack of analysis means that it fails to address the real issue. A tentative gesture in the direction of penalising men is simply not good enough, nor is the failure to consider other legal changes which would allow prostitute women to advertise and to share business premises. Disappointingly the CLRC's proposals serve to perpetuate the conventional wisdom that prostitution is a question of moral degeneration, and in moving to placate the reactionary consciousness opens the door for further additions to the batteries of police powers on the street.

Maria Duggan

● THE BINGO WAR

After three years, the bingo war between Britain's popular national newspapers shows no signs of dying. A new wealthy proprietor enters the scene and the prizes shoot up to the £1 million level.

Surprising it may be, but what we are seeing is yet another round of the peculiar economics which underlie Britain's national press.

Britain is almost unique in the world in having a national press. In only one other country is there anything comparable — Japan. In the United States, papers like the

Washington Post and *New York Times* have international reputations, yet for all that are regional papers serving limited circulation areas. In France, the biggest paper is not in Paris but in Normandy.

Britain's press structure is also unique in

of course, increased circulation is attractive to advertisers.

If the *Mirror* puts on 500,000 circulation, the £1 million prize can probably be paid for in about six weeks. The problem for the popular papers lies in holding such a circula-



Money replaces the news: an extreme form of the offers made in an earlier period of mass unemployment.

another way — in its economic extremes. At one extreme is the popular press which depends on the economies of scale to survive. Fixed overheads before production begins are colossal, but after a circulation is reached of around 2.5 million, a popular paper breaks into a profit that grows rapidly as extra copies are added — assuming labour disputes can be avoided.

At the other extreme is the so-called quality press which depends on advertising for its existence. But it's not just any advertising. It is the fact that these papers are read predominantly by A, B and C1 class readers which brings them in advertising aimed at that elite.

The bingo craze, started by the *Daily Star* in 1981, is simply a development of popular press economics. In three short years since it started publication in 1978, the *Daily Star* had built up a 1 million circulation, which in any other country would have looked like success indeed. But the paper was losing around £6 million a year and was nowhere near that magical 2.5 million figure. Bingo was to be the key. The *Daily Star* added half a million to its circulation before the others retaliated.

The retaliation showed the empty logic of bingo economics. Marginal costings of national newspapers are hard to come by, but certainly the big increases bingo puts on can be paid for in increased circulation. And

tion rise. Bingo is a little like the chain letter phenomenon — some subscribers initially benefit, but by definition, the vast majority must lose their money.

What the bingo wars of the past three years have shown is that there is a floating readership of some 500,000 who will either switch between papers or buy a second paper to gain those prizes. But that readership is very volatile. It moves on quickly, leaving the victim paper with all the high costs of the bingo promotion but no circulation increase left to pay for it. So bingo becomes simply another crippling expense.

Something similar to the bingo war was seen in the 1930s when popular papers offered lavish prizes to their readers. The paper which took the lead in this was ironically the old Labour *Daily Herald*. The newspapers threw everything they could lay their hands on into the battle — cameras, fountain pens, silk stockings, cutlery, kettles, teasetts, fruit services, mincing machines, mangles, overcoats, trousers, mackintoshes, boots, shoes, watches, ladies' underwear etc. It was a war of attrition eventually ended by Lord Beaverbrook. The damage it did to the finances of the *Daily Herald* may have been one of the reasons for that paper's subsequent decline.

In the bingo wars of the 1980s, all the populars have suffered similarly except for the *Sun*. The *Daily Star* is now down to a

circulation of 1.37 million and still losing £5 million a year. The *Mirror*, only marginally profitable, has seen all the benefits of its big 1982 campaign spending (over £1 million in prizes and £1 million on printing the cards and advertising on television) disappear. It trails badly still behind the *Sun*.

The *Express* has been trying desperately to keep up to the 2 million mark in circulation, and its millionaires' club idea succeeded in doing that for a short time. Now the *Express* has fallen again to just under 2 million circulation, after spending some £3½ million. The *Mail*, with its Casino game, sees its circulation stuck on 1.8 million, a level it has hovered around for some years.

Only the *Sun* has won in any sense, for its aggressive response to the *Star* and *Mirror* games pushed its circulation back past the 4 million mark and widened the gap over its popular competitors. Of all the popular daily papers, only the *Sun* can be said to be truly profitable, making some £10 million last year. For the rest, bingo has been yet another financial burden.

Yet the bingo war will not weaken Fleet Street. Only the *Daily Star* is in any way at risk in the next few years. It is the sister paper of the *Daily Express* and its owners, Fleet Holdings, may decide it is simply not worth running two daily titles. It's an old truth that the popular papers are not owned for their profitability but for the power and influence they bring — of the kind that Robert Maxwell is so evidently enjoying.

In that nothing has changed, and bingo is simply another weapon of war between these powerful proprietors.

But a bingo war which rubs news off the front pages of national newspapers is symbolic of one thing. That is that popular papers do not sell on news any more in the way they did before the television age. Nowadays, the nation knows the news in tomorrow's papers the night before from television. So popular newspapers have to sell on their entertainment value. Bingo is part of that entertainment and it may well be a healthier diet than the crime, sex and political bias that Britain's popular dailies normally display on their front pages.

Richard Henry

● POLICING STREET COLLECTORS

The miners' dispute has brought a huge police operation which has seriously encroached on civil liberties. By far the biggest impact has of course been on the miners themselves. However, in a less publicised way, it has spread far beyond them. This may

indicate the way in which the present government has created an environment in which any political activity with which it disagrees is marked out as marginal and thus a legitimate target of police harassment. One such target has been the thousands of people collecting in the street for the miners and their dependants.

The earliest recorded incidents of collectors being stopped was in mid-May in Glasgow where people were told they needed a licence and were breaking a number of detailed regulations. A little while later a similar warning was given to collectors in St Austell, in Cornwall. Since then, wherever collections have taken place reports have been made of the police either telling collectors to stop or arresting them. There have been reports of at least 35 serious incidents



of police harassment in London alone and from these, 21 arrests or cautions between the beginning of June and end of August.

Collectors have not known how seriously to take police warnings. A mild rebuke by one officer may be swiftly followed by arrests by others. This was the case in Croydon where a District Support Unit (SPG-style local police) descended upon collectors and arrested two of them shortly after an amicable warning and accommodation had been reached with a patrolling constable. In the London borough of Southwark the miners' solidarity group were told they couldn't even use the forecourt of the Labour Party head-

quarters for their collection, while in neighbouring Lambeth the police commander, meeting the trades council, acknowledged their right to collect from council property.

Support groups have responded in a variety of ways. Early in June when problems arose in two South London boroughs a well-organised protest by local MPs, Labour councillors and the trades council secured a retreat and apology from the local police. Where two collectors had been arrested for obstruction, three days later, 100 people mounted a mass fund-raising with impunity.

In some areas council property has been used as a collection point. (In Greater Manchester public libraries are allocated for such.) In others market stalls have been used, although Labour Party workers on Portobello Road market in London's Notting Hill were challenged while selling *The Miner* and stickers because the police officer believed they were not 'substantial enough' to constitute merchandise.

When meeting the organisers of collections senior police officers have usually appeared 'reasonable' and accepted that collections should be allowed to take place. In the London borough of Lambeth an agreement was reached that food collection was quite proper, that council property could be used for the collection of money and that money should not be confiscated by the police. There have been a number of similar meetings elsewhere with the result that some prosecutions have been dropped. However in other areas (like the London boroughs of Brent and Hackney) the problems continue.

It is tempting to see here the consequences of a political directive 'from on high'. Although this may be possible, the most likely explanation is rather more complex, revealing of the way the police operate, and at the same time more disturbing. In view of the fact that many police officers have been involved in riot-style duties with pickets during the miners' dispute and in other aspects of the mutual-aid operation it is hardly surprising to find some patrolling officers attempting to prevent miners collections.

This is in line with the findings of a report by the Police Studies Institute¹ that patrolling police were barely supervised, once out of the station they were largely free to act on their own initiative. Arrests are made and they are justified later. In no area is this freedom to act in an arbitrary way clearer than in public order issues. It is the problem of a force 'out of control' and urgently demands democratic limitations.

The law about street collection is not

complicated but the police do have a wide range of other powers which enable them to interfere as much as they wish. The collection of food and money at a public meeting in the open air is quite legal. Senior officers have openly recognised this. The relevant law (1916 Police Factories etc Miscellaneous Provisions Act) doesn't refer to the collection of food at all. The police have also tried to use the 1824 Vagrancy Act to charge people with 'begging'. However, cases in 1881 and 1914 in similar circumstances, involving collections for striking miners and for building workers found that trade unionists were not the 'idle and disorderly persons' the Act aimed to control. These prosecutions then are unlikely to succeed.

Other street collections of money require a permit normally obtainable from a local authority. In the Metropolitan Police area this comes from the Commissioner via a committee which meets every autumn to agree a timetable for the following year for major charities. The slots available for local appeals are unsuitable for miners' fundraising. Miners' support committees applying for these licences can expect no help here. They are trapped — no (legal) collection without an (unavailable) licence. Speaking on behalf of the GLC police committee in July, Paul

Boateng pointed out that the police are not the appropriate authority to issue such licences in any case. This should be the elected local body.

Where the police have not been able to charge collectors under these regulations they have fallen back on the classic public order charges like 'obstruction' (of the highway or of the police), behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace, threatening words or behaviour and so on. These charges are arbitrary and difficult to defend.

We can expect to hear further on these issues. A major Home Office review of public order legislation, including the 1936 Public

Order Act, is due this autumn. It is likely to include some changes in the right to demonstrate outside embassies, changes in the regulations of 'public meetings' and rallies and a requirement to give notice of the intent to hold demonstrations.²

Cathie Lloyd

¹ PSI report *The Police and People in London* especially Vol IV 'The Police in Action' 1983.

² Local Acts already require notice to be given in about ten counties and boroughs in England and Wales. The Home Office suggested in 1980 that if this became a general requirement it would be most appropriate to notify the police rather than the local authority.

Marxism
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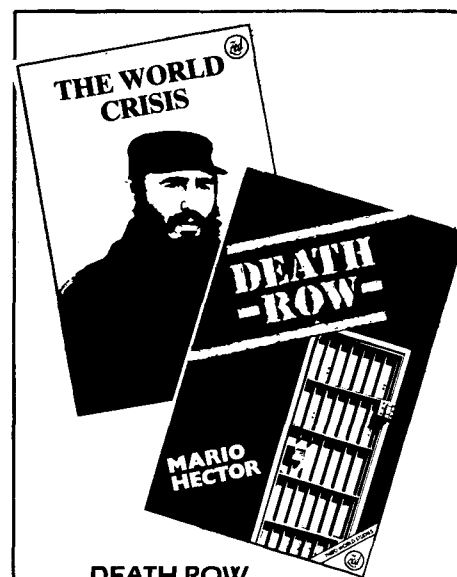
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The Labour Party was in bad shape in June 1983, it is in better shape now. To what would you ascribe this recovery, so far as it's gone?

To the party. I think that the credit for the improvement in our standing goes to a party which, in very substantial part, learned the lessons of the horrific experience before June 1983, and has shown strong determination to conduct itself in a different way. This accounts significantly for changing public perceptions about the Labour Party. It isn't complete yet. Obviously, we go on building on it – not for the sake of any cosmetic unity, but in order to demonstrate that because we are serious about getting power so we are serious about ourselves.

At the same time plainly it isn't enough yet.

No, it isn't enough, it won't be enough until we actually win that election. Thatcher is again making a dreadful, tragic mess in the conduct of this country's affairs, at home and abroad. What we had in the first place was the nasty medicine. This time she is going for overdose. Consequently, her star should have dwindled even more than it has. If you take the circumstances of this last ten or eleven months, six months of that has been the miners' strike, which has been grossly misrepresented in the press and has affected public attitudes. It's no use us wingeing about that, none of that should persuade any Labour Party member to try to move away from the alliance with the trade union movement or the miners in particular. But it certainly is a factor influencing political attitudes. Secondly, Thatcher won a very big majority and the change of attitudes that brought her that majority doesn't vanish overnight. Thirdly, there is more volatility in British politics now than at any time in living memory. There are marginal movements between the Tories and the third parties, and the third parties and us, which is evidence of an instability of attitudes, and what is encouraging is that the movement has been continually towards us, not at the speed that many people would like, but certainly in a definite direction. The question about why things aren't better is much more a question of speed than of direction.

This may be so, but the fact remains that the Tory support has not been significantly eroded. One question is why people still support Mrs Thatcher and why have the changes introduced by her not alienated more people? The other is why the Alliance, even though it can no longer claim to be a potential second party is still a reasonably strong runner as a third party?

The first point about Mrs Thatcher could have been asked at any time since 1979 and certainly at any time since 1981.

That's why I am asking it.

The reasons for her relative durability are partly to do with the Labour Party, certainly in those three years before 1983, and the scars in the public memory take a long time to heal. Secondly we've got a country which has now been trained for a few years in the simplicities of Thatcherism, both by the Government and by a generally sycophantic Conservative press, which means that large numbers of people, though not the majority, are still thinking in those simple terms of strength being equated with arrogance and determination being equated with bullying. In order to change that we've got to change the climate of opinion very profoundly. It can't be done quickly, it has to be done by a continual presentation of convincing alternatives. This autumn again provides us with

Labour has staged an impressive humiliation of June 1983. It has run the longer run, will be its ability to recover.

The Face of Labour

Eric Hobsbawm

opportunities in both of those areas.

I am glad you say that because it does seem to me that so far a good deal of the recovery of the Labour Party, welcome though it is, has been achieved by the Labour Party trying to regain confidence, establishing a more serious image of itself and not saying too much. I am glad you think the time has come when the Labour Party ought to say a little bit more. Because if I may quote what one of the commentators says a propos the Labour Party, 'The trouble with the Labour Party nowadays is that it doesn't have any tunes, not just good tunes either but no recognisable melody that you can pick up and say this is the theme for future development.' They may be wrong, but it is a view which is held.

Isn't it strange that they never said that about the Tory Party when Mrs Thatcher was inflating a balloon of promises about taxes and jobs and trade and 'greatness'? Let's face the fact that if we are detailed and assiduous in our presentation of policies, and also seek to demonstrate a coherent philosophy behind them, then we are accused of being wordy, of assuming burdens that are too great. If we don't produce those details and the arguments behind them, we are accused of being superficial, of not having 'tunes'. I am not all that bothered about those kinds of comments. We are a socialist party – and with our instinct and our purpose of transforming society, we cannot afford to rely merely upon image to carry us into office. So we therefore do need that deliberate programme, that is comprehended by the membership and properly conveyed to the public. The question is do we produce that on a timetable suggested by opponents or by critics who are sometimes given to prejudice? Or do we do it to our own timetable, our own judgement? I counsel that we do it when we are good and ready.

You said transformation of society and obviously that is the key, but you see, I think in the view of a lot of people Mrs Thatcher has got a transformation of society of her kind in mind and she's achieved a good deal of it. We think it is a transformation which is disastrous and for the worst. But if you ask people what's in her mind, what sort of Britain would Mrs Thatcher like, practical or not, they'll give an answer. Now it is important for the Labour Party surely to have, or give people, the same kind of idea, never mind what the details are of particular acts, but that we are thinking in terms of a particular kind of Britain, rather than simply anti-Thatcher or a return to the old ways. Do you believe that the Labour Party has yet managed to establish this idea in people's minds or indeed do you believe that the Labour Party has this idea itself?

ery in the opinion polls since the
its credibility. But the key test, in
er a perspective for the future.

Labour's Future

ews Neil Kinnock

No, I don't believe the Labour Party has succeeded in doing that and there have been very few years in the lifetime of the Labour Party when it has succeeded in doing that. The basic reason is that the Labour Party has to create the climate of opinion about the future, which is one of advance from whatever the current condition is, whereas the Tory Party is dedicated to retarding. So Mrs Thatcher's vision of society is an easier one to portray because it means a return to conditions which have already been experienced, pushing things back. It can be given the appearance of realism. But if you try to convey a purpose for the future you are making an appeal to what is generally called idealism. So the task of the Labour Party is a much more arduous one than that of the Tory Party. It is always more difficult to argue convincingly for a development in a future not yet within the experience of people than to mobilise nostalgia. Now when you say people understand what Mrs Thatcher's vision of society is, I don't think they do. If they accurately understood the degree to which she wants to retard the processes of civilisation, production, justice and liberty in our country, they would have rejected her. But they think they can get the restoration of what they believe were yesterday's values without yesterday's pain. That is the degree to which she has been successful in obscuring her real purpose and one of our functions is to expose that. Now when you ask about the Labour Party and its purposes, if you want a general phrase that defines our objective it is to produce in plenty and distribute in justice. Producing in plenty must clearly mean maximising the efficient use of resources by planning and co-ordinating and investing capital resources and human effort. The short-sighted, speculative market system never has and never will produce the plenty necessary to meet human need. Distribution with justice is not an afterthought. It is the basic discipline which we welcome, for it is not only a demand of democracy and decency, it is the most practical way of sustaining consumption, advancing security and improving health, the supply and standards of talent and the extent of real personal freedom.

I am not sure I agree with you about the Thatcher government being backward looking because over the past few years it has changed the nature of Britain. It's gone against the tradition of Toryism, liberalism and everything else, it is, in many ways, a nasty innovative right wing government. It's the most right-wing government in Europe other than Turkey. Now don't look at the tunes but the problems: a few more years of Mrs Thatcher and she'll have changed this country and created problems which Labour will have to deal with. What are the main changes, for the worst, which will have been brought about and which will therefore be where you have to start from?

The Thatcher government is trying to change the nature of British society by making it brutish and poverty-stricken materially, culturally and socially. Whether we are talking about crime rates, the condition of the family, expectations of service to the needy, human attitudes, views of our position in the world, attitudes on sex and on race – right across the spectrum. But personal experience and the surveys of public attitudes show that people actually reject the philosophical values of Thatcherism. They think that collective provision is essential, conciliation is important. They believe that leadership should be reasonable and responsive and not remote. Tory changes in the nature of our society are being pursued in spite of the people, not because of them.

What I am trying to get at are the particular problems. After five, eight, nine years of Thatcherism, an enormous part of British industry will have been dismantled beyond thinking. This is one of the things we will have to start off from. Never mind whether people agree with them or not, we will be left with those ruins and that's where we will have to start.

That's the precise point I was coming to. The very policies of this government that will increase the need for action to rescue, restructure and redevelop Britain are the policies which diminish the means of accomplishing that. That is the basic reality which has to be faced by the labour movement. I've put this to every union conference I have spoken at this year and got a tremendous response. People are understanding it, it's one of the big changes since 1980 in the movement. To say that in 1980 was evidence of a withdrawal of ambitions for the movement, to say it now is recognised as being a definition of the starting point. It is important not to say it with any defeatism but as a reconnaissance of the actual conditions, the battlefield on which we are going to have to fight in the immediate wake of a general election. The degree of deterioration is still not fully comprehended. The run



down in investment, both in the service areas, especially public services, and in manufacturing and productive enterprise, is something that is not going to be recovered from in a very short time. It is going to require great care in the selection of priorities and a rigorous implementation of those investment priorities with a discipline that no peacetime government has ever had to adopt



before. Our business now, especially over the next 18 months, is the selection of those priorities.

The ones that automatically suggest themselves are those that perform the dual function of encouraging growth by stimulating demand and modernising the infrastructure of the economy. Those investment priorities include the renovation of the transport system, housing and other construction in which there is a crisis of shortage, the sewage system and a whole series of major projects, many of which are in design, can be quickly implemented and all of which would subscribe to technological development and economic expansion, whilst directly tackling unemployment. Now that is one area of investment. Another area of investment is a very straightforward one of putting money into the pockets of people with a high marginal propensity to consume, both in the name of justice and in the name of redevelopment. That's where pensions come in, and likewise the payment of the student trainee wage to all youngsters, the 16 to 18 year olds. The third area is in spheres which address the skill infrastructure of a country which has got 3½ million unemployed, but a huge shortage of technical capability in strategic areas. So the third area for investment is education and training which has got to be a major commitment for the next couple of Labour governments.

You feel that there is no particular priority about technological development? I recently saw people in Mrs Thatcher's own sunrise industry complaining that we are falling behind there, nothing has been done about it, and this is in an area that she herself claims is the answer.

In a recent Neddy report on this, they have difficulty in deciding what the real reason is. They discharge the unions from blame, they say the companies are investing, they say that the Government is doing a significant amount to encourage development, although I think that they are wrong there. So what can it be? They miss the fundamental reason, that we are talking about production industries which produce *in order to sell*. If a Government has steam-rollered an economy, any industry – sunrise, sunset, smokestack or whatever – isn't going to be producing because it isn't going to sell. That is why, in addition to the participation of the workforce, the sponsorship of new investment, the encouragement of government, the additional and necessary ingredient for productive industry to take off is a market. And that is the one thing the Government has withdrawn from every single industry in this country, old or new. That is why, in a general environment of expansion policies, we can change that situation. Now there are bottlenecks like skill shortages that we have got to tackle, and there is also the need for a

national strategy for technology, whether it is education for technology, use of technology, or development of technology. And since it would be folly for us to try and replicate what's done in every country in the world, we have got to have a means of strategically picking the areas of technological development in which we can play to our greatest strengths.

All this raises a major problem, namely the role of the public sector as against the market. The present Thatcher view is that there is no role for the public sector, you can dismantle the whole lot, a sort of bourgeois anarchism, except it operates as we all know through increasingly centralised bureaucracies. Right now the gaps in a pure market economy are becoming increasingly obvious. Much the most obvious is international finance and banking where everybody in the text books used to say that's the one thing that corresponds to a market. So I'd like to know exactly how you see the combination between public planning and political decision-making and the more small scale individual, co-operative and other enterprises. Are we simply for public against market, or are we for a particular mixture and if so what? Above all what will have to be done to get the planning and administering mechanism of the country, nationally and locally, capable of dealing

the restoration of what they believe w



with the situation that Thatcher will bequeath.

To pose stark alternatives of the public economy and the market economy is a supreme folly and it's the one of which Mrs Thatcher is most guilty. Guilty to an extent that as far as I'm concerned no socialist is guilty. Socialists are rational and they respond on a rational basis, Mrs Thatcher is irrational. Public enterprise is the guy with the black hat on and private enterprise is the guy with the white hat on. She sees everything in terms of a B movie. The first thing to understand is that we are in a market, it is called the world economy. We will to a great extent make our living by selling in that market and it therefore requires the most efficient organisation of our resources, human and material, in order to satisfy need at home and in order to be effective in that market abroad. That will be crucial to our survival when the oil runs down. My definition of efficient of course embraces a very substantial obligation to the Third World just as it does a basic commitment to the poor and underprivileged of our country so that efficient must embrace those definitions as well as what could be called the requirements of accountancy. What we have got to do is to find the system of stimulation and encouragement, the climate of

enterprise which is most conducive towards meeting those domestic and international obligations. That means deliberate encouragement for the smaller businesses and for co-operatives, which are currently developing very rapidly. There is a major obligation, for instance, to provide them with preferential financial arrangements, obviously on the basis of probity, but to an extent that their initiatives and capabilities are not significantly impeded by the expense or shortage of finance, or by a lack of expertise which as small companies they can't afford to buy but collectively they could afford to hire. My natural preference is that this should take a cooperative form, in any case I think this will increasingly occur. But we ought to have a strategy for encouraging it.

As far as the 'commanding heights' are concerned we are committed to the process of re-nationalisation and that must proceed, as must our plans for the national investment bank and for planning agreements. Apart from any ideological commitment I've got to that, which is basic to my view of democratic socialism, it is the only practical way, especially in the emergency that our economy is in, to give coherence to the most efficient organisation of our resources. We can't afford the waste of a system which

terday's values without yesterday's pain.



makes whimsical responses over the short term. That is not a discipline as Mrs Thatcher insists, it is a perpetual trial that doesn't improve the performance of public or private enterprises, it impedes them, makes them more conservative, less audacious, less innovative than they would be if there was a proper strategy for the development of our economy.

But there is going to be a problem. A lot of people, especially in the labour movement, have been instinctively thinking of industry as big factories, big plants, something like Longbridge. Now, I don't think that current developments in productive industry are moving that way. We have to be thinking very much more of lots of small plants, widely spread. To what extent do you think in planning for the future, the Labour Party is bearing in mind actual developments in both society and the economy, which may make even productive industry look very different to what it was 20 years ago?

There is a temptation to counterpose the economy of the large enterprise to the economy of multifarious small enterprises. It is a temptation we should avoid. We should sponsor what is most efficient and productive and not move exclusively into either

compartment, of believing that the future is composed entirely of small businesses or the future is composed entirely of large enterprises. There is going to be a requirement for mass production and it is simply not realistic to presume that while that need continues to exist, as it always will, that those requirements can be satisfied by a dispersed multitude of small enterprises. The other thing is this, who do the small enterprises service? Very substantially, they sell to the big enterprises, so the temptation to form two schools of thought and decide which one you are going to join is one that we have got to avoid. We have got to go for the best mix of large and small, and that means again the strategic position of what can be best encouraged by large scale and small scale development respectively. In a sense it is a matter of encouraging a process already underway.

But now, just suppose that the damage which Mrs Thatcher has done to the economy is so grave and so irreversible that de facto a lot of the industries that have gone won't come back. Supposing it is not a question of having a small or large scale steel works, there won't be a steel works. Now how do we see the future of the British economy in which it maybe impossible, at least within the foreseeable future, to restore the things which, thanks very largely to the policy of the past few years, have been driven out? Under those circumstances, how do you envisage the future?

The need to sustain basic industries to provide muscle for recovery is of course the best reason for combatting closure now. The starting point must be jobs. Firstly, there is the sponsorship of jobs, through restoration of the welfare state, the multiplication of personal services, the development of the construction and other industries which are great employment users. Secondly, you have also got to have a strategy for the reduction, by a civilised and agreeable means, of the numbers of people in our economy at any time actually wanting a job. That means an extension of education and training at the onset of working life, together with a systematic reduction in the retirement age. So you are acting on both fronts, one to increase demand for labour and secondly to decrease the supply of labour. That is the way to deal, for a period of three to five years with the employment question. It doesn't answer the production question – in what activities is even that smaller labour force going to be engaged. That is where the argument for expansion, for investment, for decisions about the strengths we are going to play to comes in. It is a question, both at a company and government level, of deciding directions in which our specialties should go and of putting everything we can into doing that. I've got no doubt that if we stimulate the domestic economy, have an economic policy which is investment and



employment led, then we can not only diminish the labour force by satisfactory means, but actually ensure that there is a variety of jobs in which they can be fully employed.

It is inevitably very difficult to predict what Labour can do, will do,

the situation is a bit unknown. But supposing you were to look around the world right now and see what initiatives in particular countries you would think are useful to take up, the sort of thing that you think Labour should be able to do, in Sweden or somewhere else. What parties of the Left represent the sort of approach that would be helpful to Labour or would help people understand the sort of things that Labour is doing?

The extraordinary but plain fact is true that if anyone wants an instance of what can be achieved by running a bigger deficit, they've got to look at Reagan's America. He is spending it on the wrong things, but if we are talking in terms of what can be done for an economy very quickly, by a process of ensuring that there is finance for expansion, that is the instance. I said in the House of Commons a few weeks ago, our motives would be different, our methods would be different but our means of expansion would, in effect, be similar. Now as far as governments of the Left are concerned, one of the most encouraging things over the last ten or eleven months has been the response to the proposition for global recovery of which we in the Labour Party are a very significant part. The way in which the European parties, the Nordic parties, the Australian and New Zealand parties and even people in centrist parties abroad, recognise the need for systematic and coordinated recovery policies is significant. Of course, we can't just wait for the coincidence of like minded governments to turn up, that would be ridiculous. So we must win the argument in many countries for those alternative policies of growth in the same way as planetary Thatcherism over a short period has won the argument for world contraction. Our argument has got much more force. We can demonstrate that if governments raise their public expenditure by 1% we are talking about the creation of five

million jobs in two years in the Common Market countries alone. We have put that argument jointly with several others including the Swedish Social Democrats, the German SPD and the French Socialist Party. But it also embraces the left of the American Democratic Party and people like the Irish prime minister.

What I had in mind was a concrete example. For instance, everybody who goes to France can see a public transport system which has been the making of both France nationally and Paris. That is one example. Perhaps you can think of one from Sweden, from Austria, something about the educational system or about welfare, something that shows what can be done even in the 1970s and early 80s.

I don't think we have to translate it internationally because all the ingredients of our policies have precedents somewhere else. Not for any reasons of nationalism but for reasons of practicality, I think that people have got to be able to identify our programme as something that distinctly relates to the present British condition. It's handy to have precedents. But for every one that you toss up from some other country people say, 'oh well the circumstances are different there'.

No, it's not conclusive but it is handy. Just one other thing on what you might say are future prospects. The French experience shows how difficult it is for a single government to undertake something in isolation without some form of international backing. A Labour government might well face a similar problem, have you got any idea of how this could be tackled?

The French government, for understandable reasons, didn't take enough precautionary steps before committing itself to its growth

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plan. They went out for a gentle expansionary jog and got mugged by the British and German governments. Our economy is structurally different, especially in terms of financial institutions, our currency value and our international trading relationships. An intrinsic part of our programme, for instance, will be stringent exchange controls. The context will be a very low level of activity in our economy and an immense surplus of resources. This makes it very difficult to draw parallels between what happened to the French attempt at expansion policies and what will happen to us. Also in our case the passage of time will mean that the related economies are all going to be weaker and the ability of our neighbours to react against our expansionary policies will be very limited. They'll be damn near the bottom. They managed to screw France by going under France, by tightening their economies even more and leaving the French exposed. Now those economies have been tightened to the point that there is not much more that can be done.

Let's return to our earlier themes, namely the Labour Party and how it can get a national consensus behind it and become the future party of the transformation of society. This country, its economy and society, has been changing fairly substantially, accelerated in certain ways by Thatcher, but nevertheless it has changed greatly over the last decade. The Labour Party still has an enormous strength in what you might say is its old trunk, the old traditions. This strength is probably still the basic strength of the labour movement and you can see it in the miners' strike. As an historian, I cannot think of another strike which could have carried on, on that scale, for that length of time in British history and I cannot think of another country in which this would have been possible. So in all sorts of ways the great assets, the traditional assets of Labour and the labour movement are still there and if I may say so you

are part of it, where you come from is part of it. However, does the party, do you yourself, represent if you like, that bit of Britain which has been developing but which is no longer developing, neither geographically nor socially? It is no longer possible to appeal to those newer areas in the ways we can still appeal to the old Labour strength. That's one of the big problems, because it's an issue that affects Labour's future as a national movement.

I never think of it as the 'old' Labour strength, I never have. Because all my experience is that no matter how great a stronghold for Labour an area is the people still need to be persuaded. All the theories about sticking a Labour label on a donkey and it will get elected, they are not borne out because people still have their questions and want their answers. How do we make the appeal? We demonstrate that we can handle change. Because right across the spectrum in the areas of the Labour strongholds, and elsewhere, people understand that a big change is going on. But because the powers that be have tried to ram a change down the throats of people without giving them any alternatives, without trying to handle and to civilise the process of change, the change stimulates defensiveness and resistance. Now I think we can demonstrate that amongst all the classes and in every geographical area in this country, we are not going to ignore change or stand in its way and get flattened. We are determined to subordinate this change to human requirements, to the needs of the people, to the realities of work and production and of earning our living. That's what Toryism never attempts to do of course, but it is central to our purpose. People elected a Labour government in 1945 in large part because they believed in Labour as a party that could handle the monumental changes that had been dramatically illustrated by slump and war. They can be convinced again that we have the

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capacity to manage change in a way that gives people the advantage of those changes without making them the victim of those changes. That's an appeal that has got to be made both in the strongest Labour redoubt and in the marginal constituencies.

Sure, you obviously believe and most people in Labour believe that Labour is capable of making this appeal. But have we yet made it successfully? What can we do to recover, for instance, all those people in the centre and the south of the country in, let's say, Swindon, which is no longer dominated by the old western region with tens of thousands of people in rail workshops, but increasingly all sorts of small, up and coming new industries and the middle and professional classes and the youth and the kids that go with it. That we can do it is another question have we gone far enough and if we haven't what else can be done to recover?

You hit upon a good example in Swindon because they are wiping out the basic industry and there isn't enough alternative coming in. The unemployment rate there is 8% and it is going to go on rising. Now even if there is an argument for change in respect of the British Rail workshops, and I'm not convinced of that frankly, the question is how we handle it. Do we tackle it by not only knocking those 1,200 people out of work but the other 600 or 700 jobs dependent on those 1,200, or do we say there is a commitment to expansion, let us use the facilities, talents and experience at the Swindon workshops? Or if that isn't enough, how do we handle that change in terms of reducing the retirement age, prolonging training and education, finding the alternatives that mean that we can have change without mass destruction, change that doesn't mean collapse.

Mrs Thatcher is in power with a large majority for several years. Now in that situation what the labour movement or the Labour Party does is clearly not only parliamentary debates or propaganda, there is more to it surely, than that. What can we do while we are also preparing to get the support of the people to elect a new Labour government. For instance what can we do now in local government, the action of the unions, and so on.

First of all, there are options like the conduct of socialist government at local level that can mitigate the effects of Thatcherism and also provide us with the examples of how with a different system of operating values, life can be better in an area with local Labour government than in areas controlled by Tory government at local as well as national level. The problem is that such is the legal and financial straitjacket imposed by the Government that the facilities for making that practical demonstration of the superiority of our values and policies are extremely constricted. So, we do what we can in that area to set up the models, as an alternative to Toryism, although clearly not to the extent that we would like.

Are you thinking of any particular examples of what is being done, can be done?

The work of the metropolitan counties in sponsoring industrial development, their transport policies, the educational and social service policies of various areas, the reform of the status and rights of council house tenants, attitudes towards the conservation of the environment. The list embraces Labour county councils, local councils, metropolitan councils, all of them. There are instances of how even in the most difficult circumstances you have a council that is doing its damndest to ensure that the effects of Toryism

are mitigated and that the condition of life is protected. But there are immense limitations on what can be done. That does leave us with the, yes, traditional but unavoidable requirements in opposition of developing, describing and communicating the alternatives. That is neither dramatic nor original. But sit down and think for a fortnight and you will still come to the conclusion that this is the slog that has to be undertaken.

Is there not a danger that one may underestimate what can be done outside parliamentary opposition, through public action and campaigning which at least enables people to indicate how far government can go. On your basis, there wouldn't be all that much case for the campaign to preserve the GLC.

No, I wouldn't want to give that impression at all, the sky is the limit. I think the GLC campaign is a model of that combination of exposure and presentation of alternatives which is the basic theme that we have got to keep on putting. It's the perfect example. The same is true of the Mets campaign and a lot of the health service campaigning, especially since we've moved it into the phase where we are not just saying 'defend your health service', but 'construct a better health service', offering the positive as well as the defensive.

This raises the problem of the combination of the different parts of the labour movement and their respective activities.

They have got to be complementary.

They ought to be complementary but this is not automatic. Take a strike, take the miners' strike, no party can simply be the auxiliary of any particular section of the population which decided to go on strike, however solidly committed in sympathy to it. But at the same time the Labour Party and the unions are closely connected. There are difficulties with relationships, there have always been throughout the history of all Labour parties and all socialist parties and yet the two have to live together and belong together. Can you say something either in connection with the miners' or dockers' strikes, about what you think the relations between the Labour Party and the unions is, or should be.

The relationship must be close and complementary and it's a two-way business. That has always been the case, but we have satisfied ourselves with the rhetoric of that alliance too extensively in the past. We should literally plan and construct policies together and implement them together. It is a question of building a body of comprehending support before getting elected and sustaining that comprehending support after being elected, it is a continual business. We are closer to it than we have ever been before, and the reason is what was done in 1982-3 in the drawing up of very extensive and very detailed documents between the TUC and the Labour Party. That is a basis for us to work from, which can turn a lot of the rhetoric of alliance into a very close working partnership. There have been times in the history of the labour movement when some of the Labour leadership has been embarrassed by the trade union relationship and has therefore gone cold on it. There have been times likewise when the trade unions have felt less need for political articulation and support and have gone cold on it. As far as I am concerned this side of the bargain isn't going to go cold and from my knowledge of the trade union leadership, and I am not just talking about the top national leadership, I think they are more acutely aware of the need for political involvement than has been the case for many years. Take the miners' strike. I said earlier that it's a factor in influencing

perceptions of the Labour Party and influencing our standing at the ballot box and in the opinion polls. I don't think it should daunt us. There have been a few people who have counselled, over these months, 'ah well it's such a difficulty, such an influence in the political field, that it ought to be an arm's length relationship'. That's not the case, it can't be the case. And it's no good wingeing about the fact that we've got a relationship whose benefit we enjoy for most of the time but at the crunch has got to be somehow softened, that can't be.

But can I put this to you. The miners' strike is about very profound themes in Thatcher's Britain, it's not just about shutting pits or anything else. It is something which raises the basic issues of what an alternative Britain ought to be like, and what is intolerable about Thatcher's Britain. Now can it not be said that the Labour Party has left the argument of these profound themes much too much to people engaged in the strike, that the party itself has kept a bit mum, its profile has been a bit low.

any industry – sunrise, sunset, smokestack
or whatever – isn't going to be producing
because it isn't going to sell



Well the profile hasn't been low, the reporting has been lousy. During the strike I have put out about three dozen speeches and statements arguing the positive case for coal. But unless you are talking about the sensational aspect of the strike, they don't want to know and they are not going to report you. In spite of that we kept on putting it out, in order to try and keep everybody's eye on the ball, which is the question of whether whole communities and resources are to be discarded or safeguarded. They are the alternatives, that's the clash of values between Thatcherism and us. She is the discard value and we are the safeguard value. We are trying all the time to put the rational case for coal, which is a compelling case, it has been for 20 odd years and it will be for another 100 years. That has been subsumed in the sensational questions. It is wrong that it has been but that's a fact of life. Trying to get the issue of central importance through is like shovelling sand, but that is what I have been trying to do. It isn't just our enemies who have been preoccupied with the sensational aspect of the strike. There are some in the movement, though not in the NUM, who have been equally guilty of that, by making the test of commitment to the miners' cause into a test of commitment to the sensational aspect. They haven't bothered to look at the real issues in this strike — fuel and energy policy, the management of change for those communities and the impact on people.

Supposing Reagan is re-elected, or even supposing he isn't, we are entering a very bad period indeed, a very dangerous period, with the danger of sliding into a global war considerable. Now this isn't a

question about the basic defence policy for Britain, but what can the Labour Party do, even in the next few years before it's in government, to help defuse, diminish the danger of war?

It's a question of trying to convince the super powers of the real effects on them and the sterility of their postures as a result of following defence policies that are completely dominated by the arms race. But we don't do this just as a party, or even just as a country. It's something to be done internationally with us as major subscribers – making those arguments, influencing domestic opinion in both blocs, though that task is much more difficult for the Soviet Union than it is with the United States. People will say that approach is neither imaginative nor impressive because our strength is puny by comparison with those super powers, and we will have no edge at all if we ourselves withdraw from the nuclear dimension. The answer to that is that we are demonstrably exercising no influence now by being part of that nuclear relationship, and therefore there has got to be a greater assertiveness that comes from the fact that we, like the people of nearly every other country in the world, cannot tolerate being dominated by superpower considerations which primarily suit the convenience of the super powers themselves and nobody else. It's an argument that can't convince overnight, or maybe over a decade but it is one that has got to be put all the time. It is our world as well, that is the point. We have got to use the facts of increasing danger and waste as part of our argument.

Why are you glad to be leader of the British Labour Party, what is so good about being in this country, what are the things in this country that you think ought to be preserved, what's good, even great about Britain?

Tolerance, patience, compassion, independence. They are all virtues that are partially obscured by the fact that the vices of our society and other societies – meanness, brutality, selfishness – are sensational and therefore get much more coverage. But on any investigation you find those virtues are profound and characteristic of a great majority. They are immense strengths in our country, though obviously we do not have a monopoly of them.

Is there anything that you think is relatively peculiar to our country – no country has a monopoly of everything – in the institutions, in the atmosphere, that you particularly cherish and you think needs preserving from its or their enemies.

The will to make collective provision. To make concern practical. I think that is very well established in the British character.

In fact ours was the only country which had a national poor law from the days of Elizabeth I. In no other country was there systematic government provision from those days for doing something about the poor.

It's a basic characteristic. It's a product of commonsense and compassion and it didn't come in a gush of emotion, it was very solid even dour. When we advocate collective provision, we are going with the grain of the best of the British characteristic. If there is one British deficiency, and it is a product of history and of propaganda, it is insularity. Twenty years ago it was a bigger deficiency. But insularity is dying day by day, especially with the younger generation. I think we are very gradually, for instance, overcoming racialism in our society, most particularly among younger people. At home and abroad we are looking outward as individuals and as a people. It is a growing strength. □

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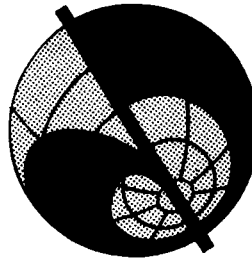
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The question of what we eat has always been seen as a matter of individual choice. This fatal misconception has led to millions of premature deaths.

Only now are we beginning to realise that food is a profoundly political issue.

Britain's Deadly Diet

Julie Sheppard

IT SEEMED AS IF the slob had got the last laugh after all when James Fixx, guru of the ten mile jog, collapsed of a fatal heart attack on a Vermont hillside earlier this year. But before all you converted sloths rush to chuck his best-selling *The Complete Book of Running* and your Nikes into the nearest waste-bin, pause for a moment's reflection. Fixx never claimed (nor has anyone else) that exercise was absolute protection against heart disease. When his autopsy revealed two coronary arteries completely clogged with fatal fatty deposits, it confirmed the importance of sound nutrition for even the Seb Coes amongst us. The moral of this tragic tale is not that running doesn't do you any good, but that eating a diet high in saturated fats may still cut you off in your prime.

Triggered by the publication of the now infamous NACNE Report (National Advisory Committee on Nutritional Education) last October, critics are now

beginning to ask awkward questions about the failure of successive governments to take any action to improve the nation's unhealthy eating habits. Drawing on a decade's expert testimony, NACNE reviewed the evidence linking a fat-saturated, sugar-laced diet with the major killer diseases — coronary heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers. It recommended drastic changes in the composition of the national diet — cutting our intake of sugar by 50%, fat by 30%, salt by 25% and increasing our fibre consumption by a quarter.

Faced with a report demanding major policy initiatives, the Government's response was predictably cynical. The DHSS, which had originally commissioned it, sat on its findings for nearly two years. Finally, it appeared amidst rumours that the food industry representatives on the Committee had attempted to doctor the report's unpalatable conclusions. After

four official drafts, and twelve re-writes the implications for government have survived, and the controversy surrounding its recommendations continues.

Meanwhile the UK death toll from heart disease outstrips that of other western countries. Whilst mortality rates have fallen dramatically in the US, Canada, Australia and Finland, Great Britain continues on an upward spiral. For men over 35 coronary heart disease is the major cause of premature death; it kills 30,000 men every year. And women fare little better — one in four die of some form of coronary illness. Compare these figures with the American experience. A concerted campaign to encourage dietary change produced a cutback in the consumption of milk, cream, butter and eggs. Since 1968 deaths from heart disease have been reduced by 25%.

Diet and public health

Clearly *something* needs to be done to halt this fatal escalation in coronary illness. The main problem is that diet is not yet seen as a public health (let alone political) issue in Britain. There are various reasons for this strange and untimely reticence. Firstly, there are the interminable and confusing disagreements about the scientific validity of evidence linking diet to disease. Most of the medical profession, egged on by government, insist on absolute proof before any effective measures can be instituted.

The trouble with this insistence is that it forgets what public health is all about — how many thousands more would have died of cholera in Victorian Britain had officials awaited definitive proof linking the disease with contaminated water supplies? It also misunderstands the role of the evidence already amassed which tells us the likely effects of a particular dietary regime on the health of the entire population. It does not claim to predict that any specific individual will succumb to coronary illness as a result of their diet. Arguments about someone's granny eating nothing but chip butties and living to 93 misses the point — the claim is that if the population as a whole reduced its intake of saturated fat it would then enjoy lower rates of heart disease.

The second, and most important, reason for the general pussy-footing around dietary reform is the strongly held belief (particularly within this Government) that what people choose to eat is an essentially private and individual affair. Obviously, the memory of war-time rationing makes the prospect of government involvement



especially unpalatable. But the pervasiveness of 'free market' philosophy means the politics of diet are doubly unthinkable. The view demarcating the public from the private runs through official thinking on dietary change.

Earlier this summer, the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy reported on diet and heart disease. Characteristically it emphasised the responsibility of the individual consumer in preventing coronary illness. Likewise, the Health Education Council's 'Look After Yourself' campaign reflects a similar approach to individual responsibility and choice. Although self-help has genuine merits in certain contexts the current focus on the individual is nothing more than a license to eat till you drop, and a classic example of the victim-blaming approach to health and disease. This individualistic emphasis, plus a conviction that the British are notoriously conservative about food anyway, are the lynch-pins of a do-nothing philosophy. But just how valid are these obstacles'?

The changing British palate

To answer these questions requires some knowledge and understanding of the forces shaping the national diet. The first misconception is that what we eat, or rather our taste for particular foods or dishes, is somehow intrinsic or locked into the British palate. But our diet has changed enormously over the last three decades. We now eat less bread, fewer cereals and vegetables, but more fat and sugar than prewar generations. Since the phasing out of rationing, we have eaten more meat, poultry, and milk products. More recent surveys indicate a rise in the consumption of fruit juices, chicken, wholemeal bread, with butter, eggs, and sugar beginning to wane. But these changes in taste have not been experienced uniformly — there are still marked class and regional differences in eating habits.

Take the ubiquitous and much despised white loaf. When it first appeared, its clear white colour, refined soft texture and hygienic wrapper recommended it to a largely affluent middle class market. Now, of course, the 'large white sliced' is the mainstay of poor families trying to feed their families on meagre earnings. Similarly, margarine was originally developed as a cheap substitute for butter. However, the proletariat has shunned margarine in favour of butter, and it is the average

middle-class habitat family which sustains the growing market in polyunsaturates.

Not only is what we eat changing but conventional foodstuffs and traditional meal-times have given way to a more permissive, open-ended pattern. We now eat more meals outside the home or bring in cooked food to eat at home. This means the traditional pattern of family meal-times has broken down in many house-

the UK death toll from heart disease outstrips that of other western countries

holds — the ritual of family eating is perhaps retained in the Sunday roast lunch, but during the working week it tends to work on a cafeteria system with family members helping themselves to whatever's in the freezer at different times during the evening. Meals tend to be smaller, and are topped up by snacks eaten throughout the day. If we ever coincide at the dinner table it's as likely that we'll sit down to a curry or a pizza as the conventional meat and two veg.

The point of this catalogue is to dispel the notion of food conservatism. The idea that the British diet is essentially immutable or inextricably inscribed in the taste-buds belies the massive shift in eating habits since the war. The British palate, such as it is, has been continually reshaped and refined, and its repertoire extended. So when free marketeers feign horror at the prospect of dietary reform they conveniently ignore the constant process of change which often proceeds at the expense of the nation's health. History teaches us that there is nothing sacrosanct about the present composition of the national diet.

The food industry

The single most powerful force in effecting this transformation in national eating habits has been the food industry. It 'intervenes' continually in moulding public and private taste. Ever since industrialisation the British diet has been increasingly processed by one of the world's most sophisticated industries. Food manufacturing is one of the UK's largest industrial sectors. And it has reached its present prominence by solving an acute and inherent problem it shares with food processors worldwide — that is, that demand for food is relatively fixed. There is just simply a limit to how much food people can eat — irrespective of income.



The way around this inherently limiting factor is by constantly stimulating peoples' appetite with new and increasingly processed food. The classic example of this process is crisps. Fat, salt, additives and packaging convert a cheap and humble spud into a highly profitable commodity. There is a structural tendency within the industry to 'add value' to basic, primary ingredients by technological processes — and then rely on the additives to replace colours and flavours lost in manufacturing. As a consequence our diet has become laden with ever increasing and unhealthy amounts of fat, sugar and salt. In 1982, the industry spent £243.6 million to persuade us to buy a vast array of new foodstuffs — about the same amount as heart disease cost the NHS last year.

The technological ingenuity of the food manufacturers means that the consumer is faced with an increasingly complicated and unrecognisable product — where flavour is separated from appearance, and price bears no relation to original ingredients. 'Cream' made entirely of vegetable oil, meat products 'spun' like synthetic fibres from mechanically recovered meat and dozens of dehydrated instant snack-foods — is it any wonder that consumers are bewildered by the contents of the week's shopping basket, and completely clueless about its nutritional value? The upshot of all this is that we are consuming large quantities of unhealthy ingredients in a 'hidden' form. Each one of us consumes on average 86lbs of sugar annually — 60% of that amount is taken in unwittingly in the form of manufactured foods and drinks. Such forced feeding makes a mockery of our much vaunted free choice.

The achievements of rationing

Official indifference to this state of affairs belies what could and has been attempted before to raise the nation's nutritional standards. The rationing system demonstrated a remarkably determined effort to improve national health and democratise food supplies. The First World War had revealed just how dependent Britain was on imported food, and the poor physical state of the population. Rickets, TB, anaemia and physical underdevelopment were common. A nutritional survey carried out at the beginning of the Second World War showed the majority still marginally under-nourished. The Ministry of Food set up a rationing system designed to ensure that working class families received a minimum quota of nutrients in their diet, and that food was more equally distributed. According to nutritionists working

at the time, the beneficial effects of adequate nutrition were felt almost immediately, especially amongst children.

Paradoxically, rationing can be viewed as one of the most successful public health measures ever undertaken. It succeeded in eradicating deficiency diseases. Since then the pattern of ill-health has mirrored changes in the postwar diet — Britain now suffers from diseases caused by over-nourishment. But successive postwar governments have continued to insist on the individual's right to eat what they will knowing full well that ministries constantly intervene in the free market to control the supply, composition and price of food. Everything a government does has some health impact; their actions impinge on practically every aspect of food choice.

The role of government

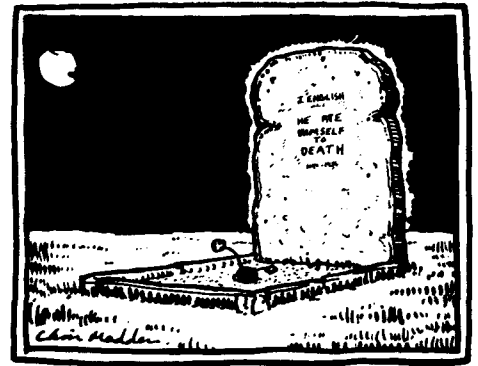
Both local and central government play a clear and direct role in food provision by virtue of the public sector which feeds millions daily in its work canteens, hospitals, schools and prisons. In this sense alone government bears a crucial responsibility in setting a framework for dietary habits.

the idea that the British diet is . . . inextricably inscribed in the taste-buds belies the massive shift in eating habits since the war

Nevertheless, the main instrument of national food policy resides in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF). It is the main obstacle to dietary reform, and any proposals for change will necessarily conflict with its aims and operation.

Postwar food policy has always been preoccupied with supply — not surprising perhaps when the war had so forcibly reminded the government of the nation's dependence on imported food. Consequently the concern is with the producers and not the consumers of food. Given Britain's reliance on processed food (almost 70% of our diet is processed in some form), one would have thought national policy would reflect a fairly even balance between the interests of food manufacture and those of agriculture. Not so.

Because of its origins, MAFF is securely aligned to farming, with the present system of agricultural support ensuring the stability and continued profitability of



the farming industry. It does so at the expense of our health.

Encouragement to produce unhealthy foodstuffs comes in different ways. The price of butter is subsidised to increase its consumption (closing the price differential with other fats) at a time when nutritionists are telling us to switch to polyunsaturated margarine. The 14p a pound subsidy is shortly to be removed — in order to combat the expected fall in sales, the Butter Information Council is spending £4 million (that's twice as much as the HEC's annual budget!) to persuade us of its 'natural goodness' compared with the highly synthetic and industrialised product known as margarine, and that margarine is as equally calorific. Similarly, the carcass grading system pays a premium price for meat which is on the wrong side of the lean/fat ratio.

If the policy-makers within MAFF are hostages to keeping the farmers in the style to which they are accustomed, then it is left to the DHSS to weigh in on behalf of public nutrition. Unfortunately, the men from the Department are a poor match for the collective strength of the NFU. Whenever medical fact conflicts with agricultural policy, health invariably loses out.

The laxity of standards

Apart from matters agricultural, central government also controls what manufacturers are allowed to put in to our food. This is achieved through a series of statutory measures stipulating compositional standards and labelling requirements. The industry has always resisted regulation, and have recently campaigned for the abolition of compositional standards altogether. A compositional standard for food is one way of guaranteeing a certain nutritional content — for example, it could insist on a certain lean/fat ratio for meat products. The industry argues (and they would, wouldn't they?) that the imposition of compositional standards in meat products simply hinders innovation, and restricts consumer choice. But past experi-

ence shows that such standards do maintain the nutritional value of certain food-stuffs – for example, sausages of all kinds deteriorated in quality once compositional standards were abolished just after the war.

Food manufacturers are only slightly more enthusiastic about labelling regulations – their view is that they should be allowed to put what they like into food, as long as they tell the customer. The onus is then on the individual consumer to make the best deal from the many competing brands. The problem with this is that labels do not provide the kind of nutritional information which would make sense of 'individual consumer choice'. Labels are not really there to inform but to act as an industry fig-leaf. Labels do not, for example, tell the public that most bought meat pies are nearly 60% fat, or that almost a quarter of the weight of tomato ketchup is comprised of sugar. And it is difficult to foresee the circumstances in which manufacturers would volunteer such information.

Food standards are notoriously lax in Britain – a leading consumer advocate on an EEC food policy committee reported that his European colleagues were worried by Britain's entry into the Common Mar-

ket precisely because of the levelling down effects on the rest of the European food sector. The major reason for this is the unwillingness of successive administrations to get tough with manufacturers, and a poorly staffed system of policing.

'real ale' is thriving . . . we need that sort of campaign around food

The example of CAMRA

The only way to unravel the mysteries of food composition is through the work of the Health Education Council. But like most quangos at the moment, its position is precarious. Entirely dependent on the DHSS for funding, it has to shy away from any overtly campaigning stance on diet, and be especially diplomatic in cases where the promotion of health conflicts with the Government's other priorities. Nevertheless, it is the Council we have to thank for the final publication of the NACNE report (even though it nearly lost its grant as a result). Given its compromised position it is unlikely that the Council could, or would want to, spearhead any popular dissent about the sorry state of the nation's

diet. So what should be done?

Clearly, the Government needs to re-order its priorities – nutrition has to come much higher in the pecking order of policy-making. This may involve the setting up some institutional machinery independent of MAFF – possibly a new Ministry of Food. Consumer representation on all the relevant statutory committees might well increase the likelihood of more stringent compositional and labelling regulations on food. And lastly, an increase in funding for health education might counter the massive assault waged by the food manufacturers on the unsuspecting consumer. If this prognosis sounds hopelessly tentative and piecemeal it's for want of any popular agent which could effect more radical changes. And herein lies the tragedy.

In the 1970s a group of disaffected beer drinkers got together to compare notes on the declining quality of keg beer. They decided to mount a national campaign, CAMRA, to persuade the brewers to bring back traditionally-brewed local ales. Against all the corporate odds the campaign forced the big five of the brewing industry to reverse their previous policy – and 'real ale' is thriving. We need that sort of campaign around food. □

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Sale of the Century

Dexter Whitfield

THE GOVERNMENT and British Telecom (BT) management together with merchant bankers and stockbrokers are hurriedly trying to pave the way for Britain's biggest ever share sale when BT is sold off this autumn. They are all desperate to make the sale 'successful' and are orchestrating a campaign to create a 'gold rush' climate leading up to the sale.

The sale of 51% of BT (in three separate payments phased over two years) will produce substantial income for the Government. It will also ensure that the potentially highly profitable development of telecommunications and information technology in Britain is firmly based in the private sector. However the BT sale is also crucial to the Tories' propaganda that selling the 'public sector to the public' is a means of spreading wealth and ownership and is a step nearer a 'company-owning democracy'. The Government won't have another similar opportunity of a huge sale of a very profitable public service (pre-tax profits in 1983/84 were £990m on £6.88 billion turnover) which can be marketed as a leader in new technology. It will also, for the first time in the asset sales programme, have direct access to the public as users of the service.

But there are also technical problems with a sale the size of BT. Financial institutions have been concerned for some time that the BT sale could swamp the Stock Exchange crowding out the flotation of other new companies and firms raising additional capital by selling new shares to existing shareholders. In 1983 the major financial institutions, insurance companies and pension funds had net investment in ordinary shares of British companies of £2.4 billion (compared to £2.2 billion invested during the same year in overseas companies). New share issues on the Stock Exchange during 1983 totalled £1.4 billion. BT will take up to £4 billion over two years. The answer for both financial and ideological reasons is to woo the so-called 'small investor'.

A success at all costs

At a time when daily newspapers are seeking £1m bingo winners the Government is trying to attract a million new small investors to become company shareholders in BT. They hope that they will buy an average £1000 worth of shares so that about a third of BT will be sold to 'the public'. In order to attract these investors the shares will have to compete with other forms of investment in the savings market, for example National Savings Certificates and building society deposit accounts. Hence the BT shares will be competitively priced. But this means sacrificing the highest possible price for BT in order to attract 'small investors'.

The biggest sale in history will also incur the biggest costs and discounts

The Government has clearly decided that the BT sale must be a success at all costs. The Tories want to avoid further scandals like Amersham International and the first Associated British Ports sales when shares were sold cheaply and then rocketed in price when trading started on the Stock Exchange. A million or so new small investors will be a useful insurance policy if the BT shares do the same. The Tories would use this to deflect criticism by claiming they had spread wealth to the public. Equally they want to avoid the initial share sale flops like Britoil, Enterprise Oil and the second Cable and Wireless flotation when only part of the share offer was taken up. Either way, the political repercussions could put further asset sales in the privatisation programme in jeopardy.

The biggest sale in history will also incur the biggest costs and discounts — estimated at more than £200m. Merchant bankers and stockbrokers will receive over £80m in fees for arranging the sale. The Government is funding £70m worth of

tax-free vouchers being offered to residential telephone subscribers. An £18 voucher to be offset against telephone bills will be given for every £250 worth of shares up to a £3000 limit. Alternatively bonus shares will be issued to investors who retain their shares for over three years. There is also a free share scheme for BT's 240,000 employees.

A £50m television, press advertising and market research operation has swung into action to try to persuade people who have never bought shares before to buy BT.

The sale could cost a lot more. Stockbrokers Grieseson, Grant & Co and Laing & Cruickshank have calculated that BT should be valued at between £7.5 billion–£8.5 billion. The initial sale could raise between £3.75 billion–£4.25 billion. But the pricing of shares to attract new investors combined with the current City sales talk which usually 'talks down' the value of public assets immediately before they are sold so that financiers can make a speculative killing afterwards, is likely to lead to a £3.0 billion–£3.5 billion sale. So the loss to the public could be as high as £1 billion or more when the £200m in sale costs are included.

The mythical small investor

The new Tory crusade for a company and property owning democracy has its target on the 'small investor', ie, anyone with up to £5000 at their disposal. They are trying to stem the tide for the number of private shareholders is declining rapidly. A recent study by the Stock Exchange¹ shows that private shareholders own only 28.2% of the shares on the Stock Exchange, down from 54% twenty years ago. Conversely, financial institutions like insurance companies and pension funds, have increased their grip on share ownership.

So even if the Tories managed to entice another million £1000 shareholders, it would increase the number of private

¹ *The Stock Exchange Survey of Share Ownership* Stock Exchange 1983.

shareholders by 62.5% to 2.6 million people (still a tiny minority of the population) and increase their proportion of the value of shares held by individuals by a mere 3.6%.

The Government is also keen to encourage employee share ownership. 'Business-ownership, home-ownership, and share-ownership are the best anti-Marxist barriers of all' declared Tory MP Edward du Cann, chairperson of the Wider Share Ownership Council writing in the foreword to a recent Institute of Directors report 'Share Ownership for Employees and Directors'. The report succinctly states their motives: '... desirability of introducing share ownership among employees generally must therefore rest on the capacity of this approach to create a general climate of opinion among employees which is favourable to the company. By providing greater insights into the nature of business risk, capital and profit, and the potential to benefit from their successful management, such schemes create a greater awareness of the close connection between a company's success and an employee's personal fortunes.'

The free share offers to employees are simply frills with major restrictions attached to them. Employees of Cable and Wireless own 0.001% of the company, 0.005% at Amersham International, and 0.2% in Britoil. There are now over 500 employee share ownership schemes in Britain 'owning' (controlled by trustees who are often the directors of the firm) £125m shares — just 0.12% of the total market value of all the shares issued on the Stock Exchange.

Speculative gains

There is ample evidence that those people who do buy shares in assets sales do so for quick speculative gains. Immediately after the sale of British Aerospace in 1981, there were 158,000 individual shareholders, excluding employees. Ten months later there were only 27,000, a reduction of 83%. The number of small shareholders (less than a 100 shares) declined from 44,000 to 3,300, a fall of 93%. At the same time the number of shareholders holding one million or more shares leapt from one to thirteen. The share registers of other companies sold by the Tories have also shrunk dramatically as individuals sold their shares. Within a year of the first Cable and Wireless sale the 150,000 shareholders had shrunk to less than 26,000. Only a month after the Amersham International sale the number of shareholders fell from 62,000 to

a mere 10,000. Within six months of the Britoil sale 18% of those with under 2000 shares had sold out — and at a time when the shares were still selling below the sale price.

Speculators are increasingly using the small investor bandwagon to send in multiple applications for shares under different names and nominee companies. Three months after the sale of Associated British Ports in February 1983, the share register revealed that 27.5% of shares were held by nominee companies. Big business is also quick to move in to snap up 'bargains at the sale'. The government blocked RTZ's bid, using nominee companies, for 49% of Enterprise Oil shares. Their holding was limited to 10% of the initial share offer. However they scooped up another 20% immediately after the sale. Norwich Union Insurance bought 10% at the same time.

Buying a small percentage of shares in BT or other asset sales does not give any form of control or ownership whatsoever. A £1000 of shares in BT will give a small investor 0.000029% control (assuming a £3.5 billion sale). Shareholders will have

Privatisation is not unique to Britain but no country is being subjected to such extensive change . . . at such a rapid pace

about as much information and influence as they would from having a building society account. Employee share ownership or an increase in individuals owning company shares is not going to have any meaningful effect on the distribution or control of wealth in Britain.

Discounts galore

The sale of BT is only part of the Tories' comprehensive privatisation programme and their fundamental restructuring of the



welfare state and public services. We are halfway through a decade in which the public sector is being drastically reduced. Years of struggle, conflicts and public investment both before and after nationalisation and the establishment of the welfare state and local public services are being swept aside as the Tories sell off assets and open up new markets for capital. A new industrial strategy has emerged, based not on state investment and grants to industry for 'new' factories and jobs, but on selling-off public assets to multinational companies and financiers. Forcing local government, health authorities and the civil service to contract-out services is also part of this strategy. Privatisation is not unique to Britain but no country is being subjected to such extensive change in nationalised industries and public services at such a rapid pace.²

Based on the highest 1984 share price as a guide the eleven major public asset sales

Government 'losses' on assets sales

	Gross sale price	Share price at sale	Highest share price in 1984	Government 'loss' on sale
Amersham International	£70.6m	142p	272p	£64.6m
Associated British Ports (1)	£22.0m	112p	298p	£36.5m
Associated British Ports (2)	£52.4m	250p	298p	£10.0m
BP (1979)	£290.0m	363p	540p	£141.4m
BP (1983)	£565.0m	435p	540p	£130.9m
Britoil	£548.8m	215p	277p	£158.0m
British Aerospace	£148.6m	150p	401p	£248.7m
Cable & Wireless 1981	£224.0m	168p	387p	£292.0m
Cable & Wireless 1983	£260.0m	275p	287p	£105.9m
Enterprise Oil	£392.2m	185p	194p	£19.0m
Jaguar Cars	£297.0m	165p	181p	£28.8m
Total	£2870.8m			£1235.9m

Up for Sale: The Multi-Billion Transfer List

	<i>Estimated Potential Market Value £ millions</i>
British Airways	1000
British Gas	7800
British Airports Authority	300
Royal Ordnance Factories	350
British Shipbuilders — warship yards	200
repair yards	200
National Bus Company	350
Post Office	1200
National Girobank	200
British Leyland inc Land Rover and Unipart	1150
British Rail assets inc	
Property Board	735
British Nuclear Fuels	250
English Water Authorities	750
Rolls Royce Ltd	350
Electricity	4500
British Steel subsidiaries	?
National Coal Board	?
British Technology Group shareholdings	50
Government shareholdings	
British Aerospace	480
BP	2300
Britoil	505
Cable and Wireless	300
Total	£22,970 million

on the Stock Exchange since 1979 have been sold at a £1235m discount — an average 43% reduction (see Table)! This doesn't take into account the higher share prices of 435p and 291p for Cable and Wireless and Amersham International in 1982/83. Merchant bankers and stock-brokers received £75m commission for arranging these sales. They also profited substantially from subsequent trading in shares.

Sealink Ferries, Inmos, National Freight and other subsidiaries of nationalised industries and British Technology Group (formerly the National Enterprise Board) shareholdings have also been sold for some £945m. Many of these, too, have been sold at knockdown prices. The British Gas Corporation's Wyth Farm oilfield was previously valued at £450m but was sold for £215m. Inmos was valued at £200m but Thorn/EMI paid only £95m. The Government sold its 30% shareholding in Logica, Britain's biggest independent computer software company for only £3.44m. Fourteen months later it was worth £23.1m — a 790% increase.

The combined costs and 'losses' of the Stock Market flotations (including BT) and the sale of shareholdings is enormous. The cost of these sales has totalled at least £295m so far with 'losses' to the public of nearly £2.5 billion. On top of this are all the loans and public investment written-off as part of their 'preparation for sale'. Over £215m was written-off in British Aerospace and Associated British Ports alone.

Tip of the iceberg

Sales to date are just the tip of the iceberg. 'No state monopoly is sacrosanct' declared John Moore, Financial Secretary to the Treasury and co-ordinator of the Government's asset sales, to a gathering of stockbrokers a year ago. He specifically mentioned coal, gas, electricity, telecommunications, bus transport, sewerage treatment and disposal. Right wing groups and business interests are clamouring for even wider privatisation including pensions, education and most of the health service. Others want to franchise sections of public services eg, companies would compete to operate different sections of British Rail. The table left lists assets currently being considered or prepared for sale.

If these assets are sold off at the same knockdown prices as previous asset sales, this will amount to a £10 billion discount. The financial institutions' fees for arranging these sales would be at least £460 million.

Combining previous and planned asset sales the Government could be giving British industry and financiers over £12 billion discounts and fees exceeding £835 billion. And this doesn't take into account the write-off of local and public investment, and the Government's continuing loss of dividend from shareholdings.

Privatisation is not just about asset sales. Local government, the NHS and the civil service are being forced to contract out services. Private health, private education, private housing, and private social services are expanding to compete against and cream-off public services. The Government is pushing responsibility for the care of children, the elderly and the sick further onto the family and volunteers. Sections of public transport too, are to be hived-off to contractors.

Tory motives

Privatisation is at the centre of the Tories' strategy because it unites and intensifies a number of attacks on the organised working class. Firstly, they are trying to break the back of the trade union movement whose strength increasingly lies in the public sector. Reducing the size of the public sector, carving it into smaller competing units with decentralised negotiations, transferring work to non-unionised firms weakens trade union organisation and bargaining power. Secondly, they hope that cuts in wages, benefits and working conditions usually associated with privatisation, coupled with de-regulation of wages and conditions, eg. scrapping the

Fair Wages Resolution and Wages Councils, will increase productivity and profits for British industry. Even the threat of privatisation at a time of rising mass unemployment has been used to negotiate productivity deals with substantial job losses.

Thirdly, the Tories want to lower people's expectations and demands of public services. They particularly want to end the universal availability of services and to put the onus onto individuals to buy services. So privatisation doesn't only mean working harder for longer hours but also paying more for poorer services out of a smaller pay packet. Pensioners, the unemployed and those dependent on supplementary benefits will be left to rely on rapidly deteriorating 'last resort' means tested public services. Fourthly, the failure of the Government's economic policies has forced the Tories to depend more heavily on asset sales. There has been a fourfold increase in asset sales since 1982/83.

Response of the labour movement

There is only now growing realisation that privatisation is not a temporary phase of Tory policy. People are struggling to fight contractors and developing ideas to defend and improve services. But there has to be a national strategy with commitment and resources to support and extend local campaigns. There are already moves to water down demands to return assets and services into public ownership and control.

It is imperative that this strategy has a long term perspective. We do not want to return to traditional nationalisation but what kind of public control will best achieve good quality and effective services? Which privatised assets and services do we want to claw back into the public sector first? Will there be additional problems with companies like BT with its joint ventures with the mighty IBM and other firms like Securicor? What will happen in the 1990s when, unless the Tories are swept from office, there will be few public assets left at a time when North Sea oil revenues will be declining sharply? Will the Labour Party come to support the dual provision of services leaving much expanded private services in health, education and social services to flourish in the same way as it has with home ownership?

These are just some of the questions and problems which must be confronted. Clearly, the fight against privatisation has to move to the centre of the labour movement's agenda. □

² Dexter Whitfield 'Privatisation and International Restructuring' in *World View* 1985.

David Jenkins has just been enthroned in Durham Cathedral. His appointment and inauguration as Bishop early in July brought a protest from people within the Church who wanted him rejected as unsuitable to hold such an office as Bishop of Durham. Ostensibly the protest was over remarks made by David Jenkins in an interview relating to the concept of the Virgin Birth. David Jenkins has held the post of Chaplain and Lecturer in Patristics at Queens College Oxford, Director of Humanum Studies at the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Director and now President of the William Temple Association and Professor of Theology at Leeds University. He is also the author of several books on theological issues. Here he is interviewed by Andrew Heywood.

The controversy surrounding your appointment suggests either church leaders drifting apart from a substantial quarter of their membership or a reactionary attempt to prevent a continuing modernist approach. What significance do you attach to the controversy?

The first point is that the opposition, or distress, has been pretty vocal, but magnified by the press. I suspect that there may be a small vocal protest but a larger number of people who support the approach, and even more who are not sure either way and would be interested to see how it goes. So I don't think that one should immediately decide that the Church of England is polarised. Secondly, there is evidence, not only in the churches, but also in other institutions including political parties, of a great deal of reaction – in the mistaken belief that the way to deal with our present problems is to reassert an imagined simple identity that was supposed to have worked in the past, whether Christian, Conservative, Labour or other. So I think this disturbance, triggered off by some remarks of mine, is symptomatic, not merely of reaction and worry within the Church, but in society at large.

Do you feel that the Church of England has a continuing role to play as an established church?

As with all historical development, as long as you can use institutions more for positive purposes than for negative ones, well and good. But be ready to change them when they become nothing but a liability. There's no ideal solution. I think the establishment can continue, on balance, to be used but I think it will become more and more obsolescent and more of an obstacle. The establishment of the Church of England is a survival from the christendom situation and, clearly, the christendom situation is over. So we are in a betwixt and between stage. I would not, at this particular juncture, be bothered about disestablishment unless the Church had very positive reasons, not theoretical ones, or unless a sufficient body of opinion in society generally thought the Church ought to be disestablished.

How do you react to a vociferous right-wing response, both in parliament and elsewhere, to the Church meddling with political concerns?

There are two things here. One is that this fairly vociferous response is part of this backward looking and nostalgia I have mentioned and, as such, is to be taken seriously but not in the terms of the people who make it. The other point is that as the Church, in my view rightly, is involved in political and social affairs, it does have to keep on thinking very hard about its distinctive role and not simply jump on any particular bandwagon.

Preaching Progress

An interview with
the Bishop of Durham,
David Jenkins

gon. So the criticism is largely mistaken but can, in fact, be useful and should be taken seriously.

The business of the Church is not actually either to win elections or to be the main agent in improving society. It ought to be witnessing to the transcendence of God and the involvement of God in the world and, therefore, ought to be able to pay attention to questions and difficulties of its people and opponents.

Many committed Christians, including priests, have responded to the call of CND and other movements around the issue of peace and disarmament and yet the Church itself has stood back and failed to express any authoritative concern or leadership.

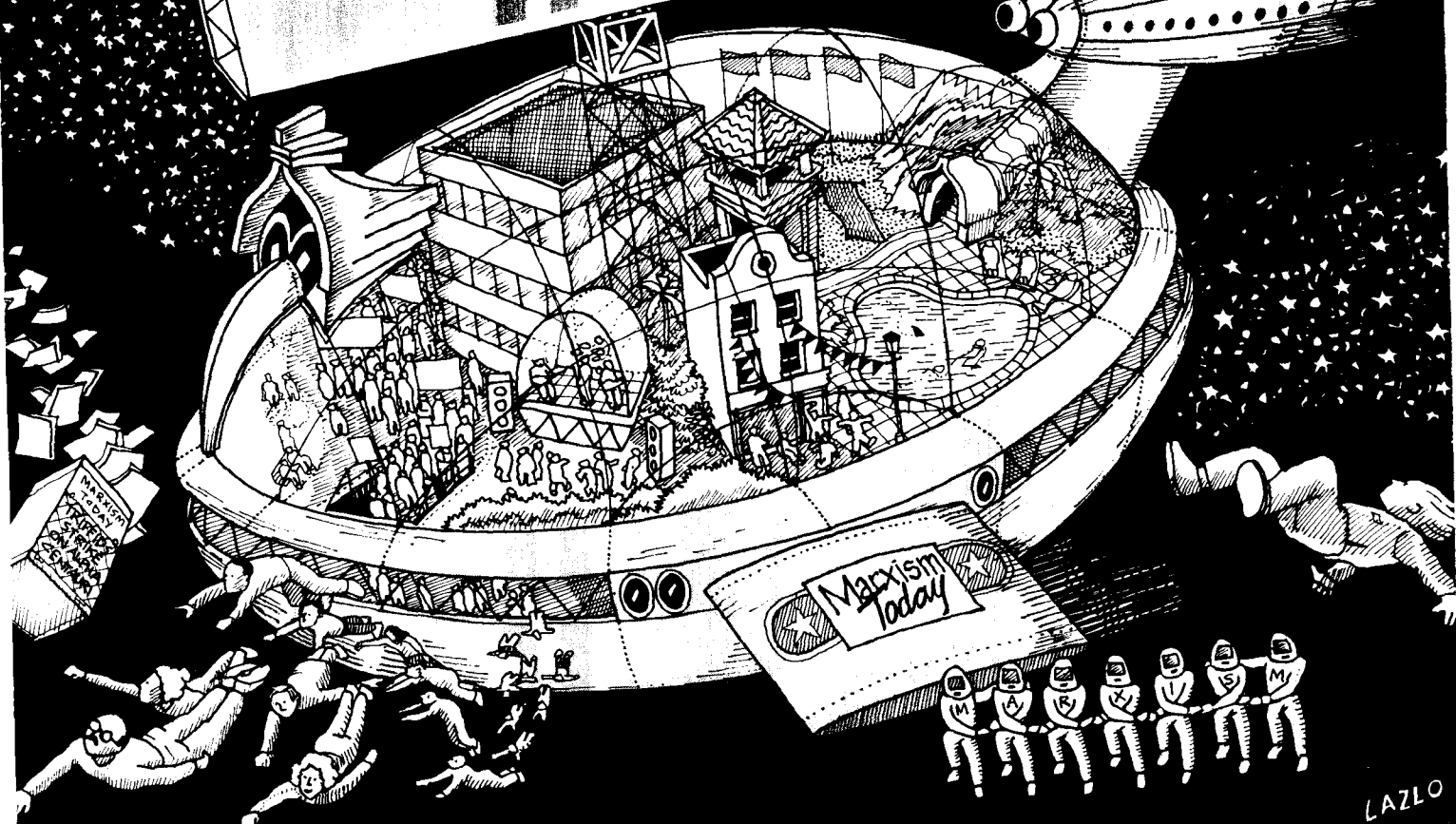
Yes indeed – for two reasons I think; one negative and one positive. The Church of England in particular is, by its very definition and its historical development, bound up with the social fabric of society and will, therefore, tend towards institutional caution. But, on the other hand, however much you ought to be in favour of peace I don't see how the Church, as such, could have any particular programme. I mean the business of nuclear armament is so obscene that there can't be any question about the morality of it. The only question is how do you avoid them being used and then how do you get them run down? But it remains a political question as to how you do that and I don't think that the Church has any privileged information about that. I understand and, as a matter of fact, support groups of Christians deciding that a particular programme is the best one and I think that intensive pressure group activity is of the greatest importance – but I don't think you can decide on any single issue that one single policy is sure to be right.



A FORWARD-LOOKING WEEKEND —
2/3/4 NOVEMBER at the CITY UNIVERSITY

Active

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More than bricks and mortar

Over 350,000 are still jobless in London. Empty factory floorspace totals 33 million square feet. But jobs are still being squeezed out by record land prices, as speculators gamble on a change of use, and offices or warehousing kill manufacturing jobs.

Our new pamphlet explains why — and shows what the Greater London Enterprise Board is doing to demonstrate the alternative, with one of London's biggest-ever programmes of industrial and commercial property development, due to provide space for over 4,000 jobs.

Our programme is more than bricks and mortar. We aim to remove property bottlenecks by providing the right property in the right place, at the right time, and on the right conditions. In the framework of our sector strategies, we aim to provide space for industries that need it most, in places where available property is under threat, or for groups, such as ethnic minorities, who find it hardest to get a foot on the property rung.

We see property as a resource, available to the community as a source of power to help shape its future. So we aim to involve all those affected, in determining the shape of our developments — tenants, the workforce, trade organisations, and the community.

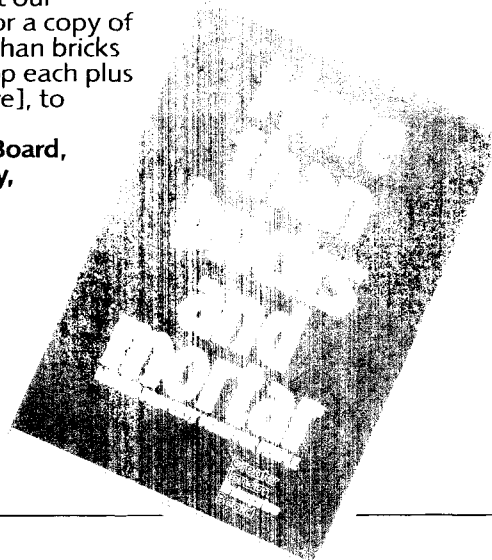
And we have developed new frameworks to make this possible — from Community Property Companies, with guaranteed shareholdings for tenants, workers, and community groups; to site offices with accommodation and resources for local people, in managing the development of vacant sites.

We are also developing area projects, as in Hackney Road, where we are co-operating with local councils, trade bodies, and residents in an all-round programme of area rehabilitation involving jobs, property refurbishment, investment, and environmental and social projects, all planned from a local office.

To find out more about our distinctive approach write for a copy of our new publication 'More than bricks and mortar' [£1 each, or 75p each plus p&p for orders of 10 or more], to 'Bricks and mortar', Ref: LA, Greater London Enterprise Board, 63-67 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BD.

Also available at the same price: 'Strategy for Co-operation', on worker co-ops in London, and 'Black businesses: redressing the balance'. New editions later in the year of pamphlets on Enterprise Planning and on Technology Networks.

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MARXISM TODAY's growth has been an exciting event for the Left. Now the event goes live.

Left Alive brings together scores of challenging speakers from within and without the Left to pool ideas and open up new perspectives.

Big political questions of today will be one focus ... will Thatcherism have staying power, and what lessons does its highly ideological and popularly-rooted approach have for the Left? ... Is Left fundamentalism an answer or an aid to the hard Right? ...

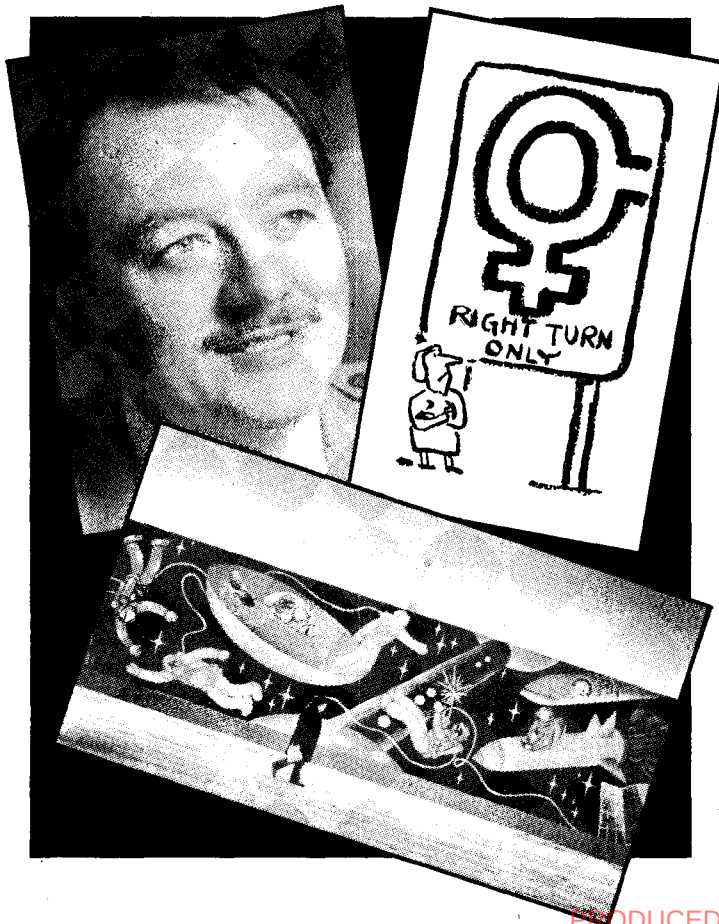
But Left Alive also aims to look beyond present preoccupations towards the fast-approaching 21st century. Among the seventy-plus sessions will be debates on: new world relations to lift the threat of nuclear war and famine; the transformation of work; rescuing the environment; developments in space; and putting people back into running society.

The future of today's movements will be argued out, including the Labour Movement, feminism, CND, anti-racism, the Greens and the Communist Party. Other sessions will be breaking new ground in reviewing the massively popular areas of soap operas, women's magazines and royalty.

After the discussion has heated up, you will be able to cool down with sport and dance. And while you pause for breath you can enjoy music, videos, comedy and film, or browse among the stalls. Children also have a full programme of entertainment.

This programme lists the sessions fixed by the time we went to press. But the world doesn't stand still – and there will be more sessions added to keep the Left alive to current events and controversies!

The participants named in the programme will appear subject to final availability. They will be speaking in their personal capacities.



A
major Friday night
event is being planned.

WATCH THE PRESS
FOR DETAILS.

TIMETABLE

SATURDAY

- 9-10 **Registration**
- 10-12.30 **Sessions** Towards 2000 • Full employment: slogan or strategy? • Town hall radicals: top rate? • Arms conversion: guns into butter • Women's magazines – essential reading? • The British economy in the 1990s • What sort of police force? • Utopias and motherhood • Which way Left for the trade unions? • Liberalism and socialism: exclusivism? • Images of the Left • Marxism and Britain's crisis • Housing: to buy or not to buy • Socialism and statism • Europe's offshore island • Fleet Street – going from bad to worse •
- 12.30-2.30 **Lunch** With live music • Sport and dance: Jogging • Trampolining • Body conditioning
- 2.30-5 **Sessions** Redundant men – or test-tube women? • Nuclear-free defence • Reds and Greens • Labour and the people • This green and pleasant land • Heaven knows I'm miserable now • The strong state • Northern Ireland crisis • Art – prisoner of the state? • Bottomless pit: the media on the miners • Is a popular feminism possible? • Food: measure or pleasure? • The class of 1990 • Unions and Labour: biting on the ballot • The church: revisionists and hard-liners at prayer • Revolution and armed struggle in Latin America • 'Artificial brain' storm • Institutionalised anti-racism – help or hindrance?
- 5.30-7 **Sport and dance** Martial arts • Volleyball • Basketball • Rockclimbing
- 7.30-11 **Alive and Kicking** Cabaret • Bands • Film

SUNDAY

- 10.30-12.30 **Sessions** Crime and punishment • A strategy for the TUC • Outside Left: still on the wings? • Soap opera – soft soap or social comment? Socialist economies: signals at red? • Putting people back into society • The struggle within the struggle • Whatever happened to Eurocommunism? • Simplemente Maria? • Multicultural education: opium or opportunity? • Space – the final frontier • People, politics and PR • Thatcherism and the Left • CND explosion: the fall-out • Angela Carter
- 12.30-2 **Lunch** With live music • Sport and dance: Jazz dance • Volleyball • Basketball
- 2-4.30 **Sessions** East and West square up • Breaking school rules • Women and the Right • The Tories and prospects for Labour • Communists and Labour – new perspectives? • Drugs – the 80s overdose • Lib-Lab contact • Has work a future? • Trevor Griffiths • Poor lore – poverty in the 80s • New strategies in southern Africa • A question of style • Lesbian and gay rights: where is the Left? • Europe on the defensive • Human freedom, animal rights – one struggle, one fight? • The miners' strike • The Queen rules, OK? • Third world – second thoughts

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LEFT IN THE CRECHE SHOW



A WEEKEND of children's entertainments will take place in the creche area. Activities will include toys, painting, crayoning, books, games and soft-play for the under-5s.

The provisional entertainment programme for the weekend is:

- **SATURDAY MORNING:** Music Workshop (6-12s) from 10.30 to 11.30. Dance Workshop (6-12s) from 11.30 to 12.30. Common Lore storytelling (under 5s) 11.15 to 12.15. Face painting from 10.30
- **SATURDAY AFTERNOON:** 'Not the Sound of Music' show (5-12s) from 2.45 to 3.30. Circus skills workshop 4 to 5.30.

- **SUNDAY MORNING:** Swimming, 10.15 to 11.30. Puppet show (under 8s) 11 to 12. Drama workshop 11 to 12.
- **SUNDAY AFTERNOON:** Self defence for girls, 2 to 3. "There's no smoke without Walter" theatre for 5-11s, 3.15 to 4.15.

For older children there will also be a video workshop. Apply early for this.

The creche will be open from 9 to 12.30pm and 2.15 to 7 on Saturday. And on Sunday 10 to 12.30pm and 1.45 to 5. The quiet room will remain open throughout the day.

The activities are mainly for under 13s but young people over this age will be welcome. There will be positive action to ensure girls have an opportunity to participate in all events.

Parents of a child with a disability should contact *Left Alive* well in advance if special provision is needed.

ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: There is access to City University for disabled people, although assistance will be required for people with severe disabilities. There are no special toilet facilities for disabled people in the building. *Left Alive* apologises for difficulties caused by this.

Signing facilities will be provided at some of the major sessions. Please contact Mary Braithwaite (01-251 4406) for further details.

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Towards 2000

Socialism was once proud to be the future. Well into the post-war period, socialists considered that constructing models of a future society based upon their political principles was an important part of their project.

Yet now that confidence has gone. Social democratic dreams of the gradual evolution of a better society have been shaken by Thatcherism and recession. And disillusion has replaced the hopes which earlier socialists invested in the Soviet model.

Current socialist debate has concentrated on immediate difficulties and past failures – even in some exchanges which have been notable for frankness and originality, for example on Thatcherism and the problems of the labour movement.

The Left's dilemma is how to move from a preoccupation with the past to a concern about the future. How can a vision of socialism be recreated which faces up to the realities of the 1980s while looking beyond to the 21st century? How can solutions to such problems for the Left as technology and work, the Third World, and the environment become part of a vision of socialism appropriate to 2000AD?

Speakers include **Göran Therborn**, author of *What Does The Ruling Class Do When It Rules?*, **Raymond Williams**, author of *Towards 2000*, **Beatrix Campbell**, author of *Wigan Pier Revisited*, and **Bob Rowthorn**,

author of *Capitalism, Conflict and Inflation* and member of *Marxism Today* editorial board.

Full employment: slogan or strategy?

Mass unemployment is still rising relentlessly. Yet the Left's answers are not winning popular support. This does not mean that people don't care. Unemployment remains the most important political question for most people.

Either the alternatives are wrong or they are being argued for in the wrong way. In any case the policies will not be convincing unless slogans are put aside and a close examination is made of the causes and effects of present-day unemployment. Speakers introducing the debate will include **John Grahl**, lecturer in economics at Queen Mary College London, **Jean Gardiner**, contributor to *The Political Economy of British Capitalism* and **Adam Sharples**, senior research officer at NUPE.

Town hall radicals: top rate?

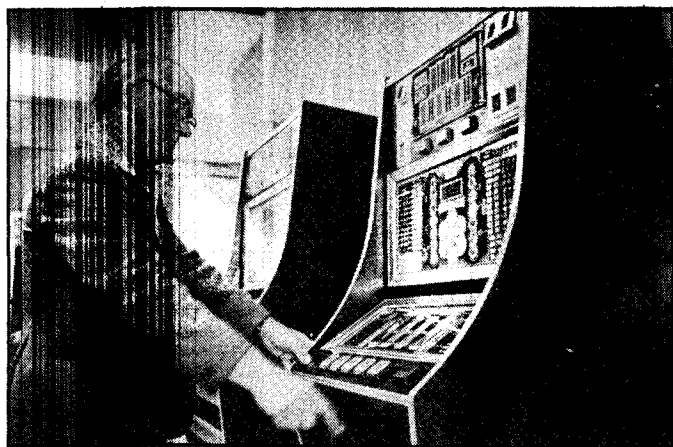
In the late 70s and early 80s an increasing number of Labour-held local authorities have been controlled by the 'radical left' in the Labour Party. De-centralisation, support for gay rights, campaigning against sexism and developing local left economic strategies have been just part of their work.

Margaret Thatcher obviously feels they are a threat as shown by her abolition of the GLC and metropolitan counties and her rate-capping. But just how successful have they been? And are their policies supported by the people?

John Carr, chair of GLC administration committee, will be among the speakers.

Arms conversion: guns into butter

The need to remove the threat of nuclear war and reduce the excessive burden of military spending, while at the same time protecting the jobs of thousands of workers in the armaments industry



is a major question facing trade unionists and the peace movement.

Arms conversion is about the planned transfer of resources currently used for arms production into production of socially useful goods.

Areas which will be debated by a panel of union and peace activists will include lack of government support for alternative plans; the need for research and development; workers' involvement in producing ideas for new projects for their plants; taking the question to those not directly involved; and what is needed from a future Labour government.

Speakers will include **Ron Todd**, TGWU general secretary-elect, **Bill Niven**, secretary of Greater London Conversion Council, and **Chris Darke**, national officer (including aerospace) for TASS and secretary of Communist Party national aerospace advisory. The chair will be **Andrew Hewitt** of Trade Union CND.

Women's magazines – essential reading?

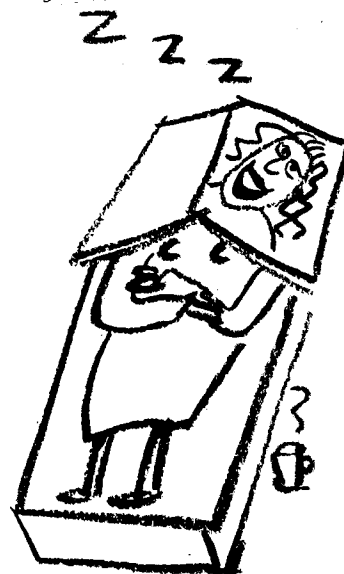
Glossy women's magazines and socialist-feminist magazines offer very different images of the ideal woman. The pursuit of pleasure and self-improvement bursts out of the pages of *Cosmopolitan*; while *Spare Rib* readers are told that real feminists are not interested in fashion and artifice.

But both types of magazine can be bitter-sweet.

Enjoying glossy fashion pictures can be a guilt-ridden experience while fundamentalist feminism can

be boring. Our panel of magazine producers will be discussing who their readers are, why women's magazines are so important and if there is room, and a readership, for a new 'different' initiative.

The panel will be **Linda Kelsey**, deputy editor of *Cosmopolitan*, **Sue O'Sullivan** from *Spare Rib*, **Aggie Mackenzie**, who works on *Company*, and **Janice Winship**, a researcher and writer on women's magazines.



The British economy in the 1990s

This is not only a period of economic recession, it is also an era of economic change. Just what will the British economy look like by 1990? Of course it depends on many imponderables, not least whether Thatcherism continues to dominate the political stage.

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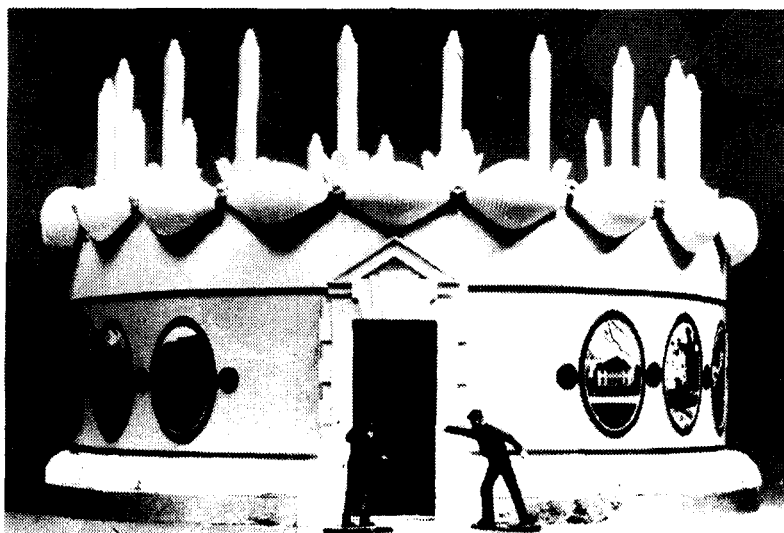
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But nevertheless there are a lot of questions the Left needs to come to terms with about what is actually happening and where we want to go.

Can full employment be restored and what will it look like? How should Britain seek to develop its international trading relationships? What industries should be expanded and which should be contracted? Can Britain go it alone, or does, for example, the French experience suggest otherwise?

What sort of police force?

Riot shields, guns and Big Brother computers seem to be becoming as much part of the police force as the funny helmets. At the same time officers talk about going back on the beat and out into the community.

How far has the image and reality of Britain's police changed? Are *Scarman Report* methods just being used to make oppression more acceptable or are some members of the force genuinely seeking more enlightened approaches? Can community policing be taken further with full accountability?

A key element in Margaret Thatcher's winning election platform was strong support for the police as part of a commitment to law and order. How can the initiative be taken out of her hands? Speakers will include Labour MP **Gerry Bermingham** and **Paul Gordon**, author of *Whitelaw*.

Utopias and motherhood

Marxism has tended to stress the negative element in utopian thought -- imagining what you want without paying heed to how you get there. But instead of placing utopian desires and practical strategy at opposite poles it is necessary to intertwine the two.

Sheila Rowbotham has been described as 'one of the most original thinkers of the past decade' and has written extensively on feminism, socialism and history. Here she looks at two utopian socialist feminist perspectives with quite different notions of mothering. Charlotte Perkins Gillman's *Herland* and Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*. Through these stories she examines such issues as the relation between biological and social difference and how we can move from existing needs rooted in the world as it is to the transformation of desire for a new way of living and mothering.

Which way Left for the trade unions?

Union Broad Lefts have had a chequered history, more often as electoral machines than active campaigning bodies for socialist ideas. This session asks what their purpose is. Are they needed in Left-led unions and how should they work in Right-wing unions? Can be co-ordinated across unions?

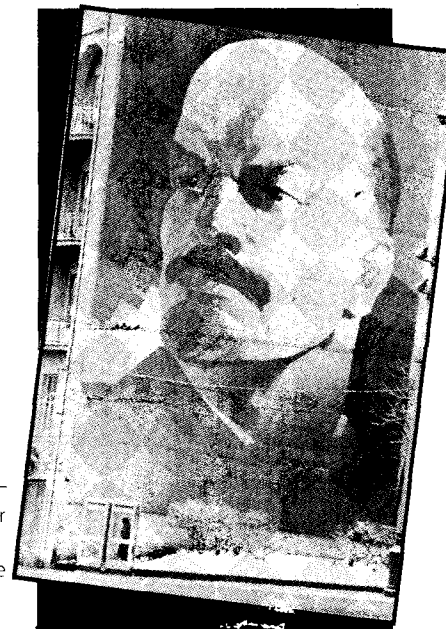
Also at issue are different trends within the Left. Is the Broad Left Organising Committee simply an ultra-left push into the unions? What role if any has BLOC to play? And what role is there left for the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions? All this and more will be discussed with leading trade unionists including **Bob Wright**, assistant general secretary of AUEW (Engineering), and **Phil Holt**, secretary of BLOC.

Liberalism and socialism: exclusivism?

The major architects of the post-war social-democratic project were Keynes and Beveridge. Neither were socialists. Both more properly belonged to the British liberal tradition.

Liberalism and socialism both have been important streams of thought in British life over the last 100 years. They have borrowed from each other, often without acknowledgement, while their strongest advocates have often been radically opposed to each other. What exactly are these philosophies? Are they irreconcilable? What can socialists learn from the liberal tradition and vice versa?

Issues of individualism, collectivism, liberty and democracy will be discussed by a panel including socialist historian **Gareth Stedman Jones** and *Financial Times* columnist **Malcolm Rutherford**.



Images of the Left

Top-hatted capitalists have made a belated departure from the Left's propaganda. In many other ways, however, the Left's attempts to communicate remain firmly planted in the first half of the century.

Posters, leaflets and platform rhetoric are the chosen media while television, advertising and good graphics and design are often dismissed. The imaginative development of festivals and the GLC's use of commercial posters remain the exceptions. Yet the Left wants to convince people that it offers a vision of the future. Can we really expect people to take notice if we present pictures with little relevance to today?

Participants will be **David Yip**, TV's Chinese Detective, playwright **Howard Brenton**, **Kathy Myers** who edited the magazine *Camera-work*, and **Jeremy Seabrook** who has written extensively on poverty.

Marxism and Britain's crisis

Explaining the origins of capitalism's crises is the stock-in-trade of Marxism -- yet the current crisis in Britain has thrown up new theoretical problems which demand new concepts and a fresh analytical approach. Britain's class composition is changing, an



unprecedented form of economic restructuring is occurring, new social and political forces are taking the stage, and Britain's position in the world is undergoing a remarkable transformation.

How well is Marxism equipped to respond to these developments? How successful have Marxists been in accounting for the unique features of Britain's current crisis? And to what extent have they translated their analysis of the crisis into practical political strategies?

Speakers will include **Anne Showstack Sassoon**, author of *Gramsci's Politics* and **Dave Priscott**, member of the Communist Party executive committee.

Housing: to buy or not to buy

Patterns of housing tenure are undergoing profound change – and the political consequences are just as significant. The Thatcherite Right has aggressively championed the cause of the owner-occupier, leaving the Left apparently marginalised as the defender of an increasingly underfunded, underprivileged and unpopular public service. How can this be changed?

How can the Left combine a sympathetic approach to the home-owning majority with its commitment to a thriving public sector? And how does the issue of tenure relate to other areas, such as house-building, and the exercise of control by people over their living conditions?

Speakers include **David Griffiths**, past-chair of the Labour Housing Group and **Mike Ball**, joint convenor of the CSE housing workshop and author of *Housing Policy and Economic Power*.

Socialism and statism

Socialism has traditionally been associated – in the minds of the Right and Left alike – with a major extension of the powers of the state. This was true of the post-war social democratic consensus. It is certainly the case in the socialist countries.

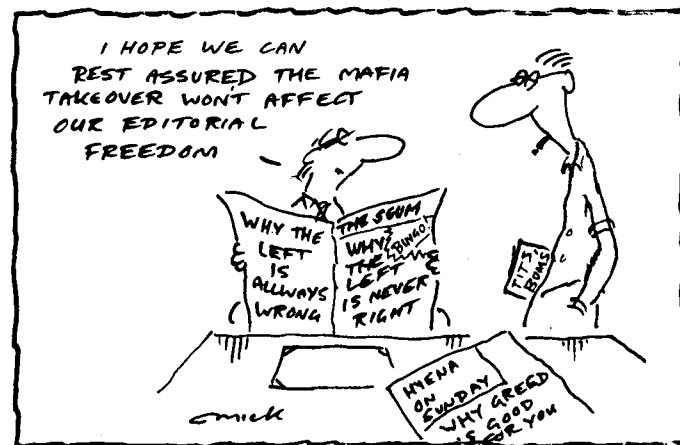
Most versions of the alternative economic strategy have also involved a big increase in the state's power. Yet many on the Left are now uneasy about this. The welfare state and nationalised industries are symbols of bureaucratic centralism not popular democracy.

So what is the alternative? How can socialism and democracy co-exist? How can collective control be combined with popular control? What new forms of collective control should be envisaged, must collective ownership always mean mega-units? Can decentralisation be a reality? And are we really talking about a very different kind of socialism? Participants include **Monty Johnstone**, writer on the Socialist countries and **Geoff Hodgson**, member of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee national executive and author of *The Democratic Economy*.

Europe's offshore island?

Europe is divided between East and West and also, in the minds of many Britons including the Left, along the English Channel. Ideas on how Europe might emerge as a distinct force overcoming the blocs have been gaining ground recently but have been largely ignored in Britain.

Could the encouragement of more independent policies and outlooks in both halves of Europe have anything to offer Britain? Would it mean the Left re-evaluating its attitude to the EEC? Or would shifts in European alignments open the way to British



non-alignment and new relationships to other areas like the Third World?

Other issues raised include the effect on trade, the kind of foreign policy appropriate to such a development, and the consequences for the Left and the peace movement. Speakers will include **Donald Sassoon**, author of the *Strategy of the Italian Communist Party*, **Gerry Pocock**, head of the Communist Party International Department, and **Stuart Holland**, Labour MP for Vauxhall.

Fleet Street – going from bad to worse?

As a new wave of rich and powerful newspaper proprietors tightens its hold, Fleet Street appears

increasingly crisis ridden. Besieged by the electronic media, driven by circulation battles to ever greater excesses, torn by management-union conflict and still unable to cope with new technology, the press presents an image of both anarchy and deep conservatism.

Yet it remains one of society's most powerful institutions, assisting the rise of Thatcherism and apparently immune to the influence of the Left. This session looks at the prospects for Fleet Street and whether the Left can mount a serious challenge to the press's right-wing ideology. Speakers will be **Peter Preston**, editor of the *Guardian*, **Clive Thornton**, former Mirror Group Newspapers Chairman, and printworker **Mike Power**, chair of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.



Redundant men – or test-tube women?

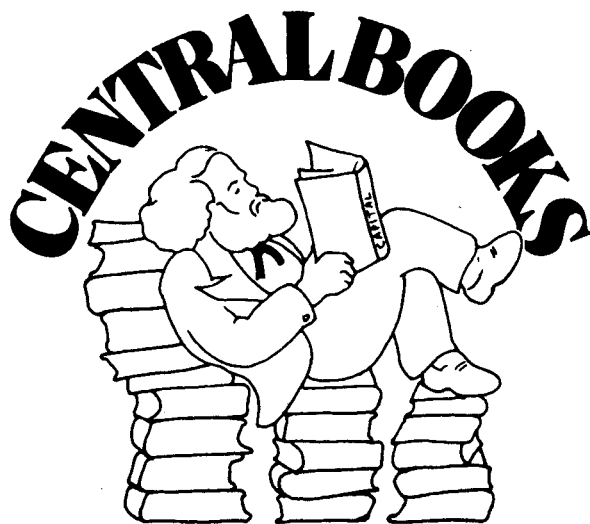
'Test tube babies', 'frozen embryos', 'surrogate motherhood'... the press bombards us with these extraordinary advances and the Warnock Committee reports on how public policy should tackle these developments. But what does it all mean for women? Will it enable more or less control by women of their bodies? And will it reinforce rather than relax the model of heterosexual parenting?

There is some reason for concern at the speed and nature of these new technologies. Infertility treatment remains one of the most under-resourced areas in medicine, while this new science receives massive funding.

Few women's organisations gave evidence to the Warnock Committee and the voices of women and the women's movement have hardly been heard.

This women-only session is a chance for women to explore together the many implications these developments raise. Contributors to the discussion include **Anne McLaren**, member of the Warnock Committee, **Hilary Rose**, Professor of Social Policy at Bradford University, **Marg Berer**, member of the





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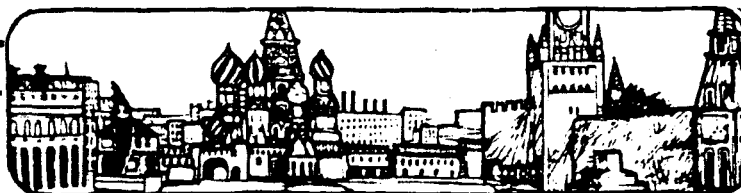
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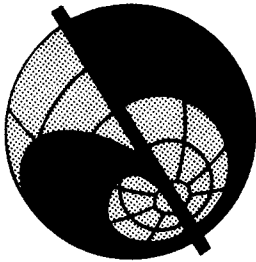
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Women's Reproductive Rights Campaign, and **Tilly Gage** from the Feminist International Network of the New Reproductive Technologies. **WOMEN ONLY**

Nuclear-free defence

If Britain were to give up nuclear weapons Russian tanks would get a clear run, argues the Right. Labour leaders have countered by saying they want to strengthen conventional defences and remain committed to NATO.

The peace movement has traditionally steered clear of defence strategies altogether and argued that military strength equals waste. But the election debacle over Polaris has made this a question that cannot be ducked. This session looks at the difficult issues including who the defences should be pointed against – the USSR, the United States, Argentina or everyone. An independently targeted defence strategy within NATO may be a contradiction in terms. On the other hand the old revolutionary policy of a people under arms may not be any more convincing.

Reds and Greens

Socialism and the ecology movement are frequently linked together as 'natural' allies, and 'green' issues often get added to the list of causes that the Left claims to take seriously.

Yet there are potentially deep divisions between the ecology and socialist movements which have yet to be fully explored. In particular, there are differences over reindustrialisation, central to much socialist strategy yet deeply distrusted by ecologists; over centralisation, assumed to be a feature of socialism yet anathema to many in the ecology movement; and over the role of the state. These will be among the themes debated in this session.

The speakers will be **Jonathon Porritt**, former co-chairperson of the Ecology Party's political committee and now director of Friends of the Earth, and **Raymond Williams**, author of *Towards 2000*.



Labour and the people

June 1983 revealed for all to see what has been happening for a long time – the erosion of Labour's popular support. The problem taxing the whole of the Left is how it can be rebuilt.

How can Labour's support among traditional sections of the working class be secured? And what about some of the "newer" sections, women, black people and the poor? Over the last year in particular the GLC has provided one example. The GLC's **Ken Livingstone** and **Beatrix Campbell**, author of *Wigan Pier Revisited*, discuss what the problem is and what can be done about it.

This green and pleasant land

Walking in the countryside is Britain's most popular outdoor pastime. Concern for the rural heritage is also shown by the growing support for environmental and conservation groups.

If only agriculture shared this appreciation. Instead, farmers and landowners retain a single-minded concentration on profitability which threatens the future of land, the most basic of resources.

In response, a strategy of conservation is needed. How can it be developed? How will we open up paths for rambling which have been closed? And what are the prospects for a 'green alliance' between conservation and recreation?

This session should offer a breath of fresh air to everyone committed to the countryside. Among those

taking part will be **Benny Rothman**, veteran of the 1932 Kinder Scout mass trespass, **Kate Ashbrook**, general secretary of the Open Spaces Society, **Malcolm MacEwen**, author of *National parks – conservation or cosmetics?*, and **Chris Hall**, editor of *The Countryman*.

Heaven knows I'm miserable now

As Thatcherism continues to transform the political landscape, the charts have filled up with a new generation of apolitical pop records. No more dole queues: no more clampdown: no more anarchy.

The class of '76 has all but disappeared from sight. Magazines, dance floors, shops and videos

promote new visual 'styles', largely uncontaminated by the cares of the real world.

Meanwhile the government of '79 is still firmly in control. Why is it that music has become so disconnected from the political change taking place all around us? Why are the 1960s being rediscovered? And how significant is the recent growth of benefit concerts for causes such as CND, the GLC and the mineworkers?

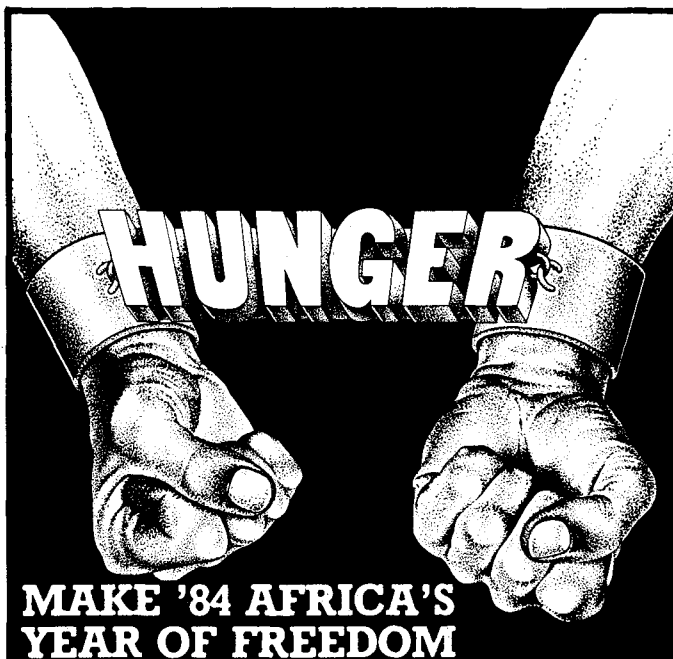
A panel from the music industry will consider the current state of rock music and pop culture. Music and video will be used to provide a specific focus for parts of the discussion, but participants will be free to explore those issues which generate most interest. Among the speakers will be **Caroline Hutton**, of Women's Revolutions Per Minute independent feminist record label, and toaster **Ranking Anne**.

The strong state

The 'strong state' has been a constant theme of Thatcherite ideology. Now its practical implications are becoming apparent with the increasingly repressive policing of industrial disputes and the frequent interventions of the judiciary.

What role does the 'strong state' play in the overall political project of Thatcherism? What relationship does the strong state have to the





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extension of the free market economy? And how extensive has been the development of the strong state during the past five years?

Stephen Sedley QC will be among a panel of speakers discussing these and other aspects of the state under Margaret Thatcher.

Northern Ireland crisis

The suffering in the north of Ireland continues unabated. The latest proposal for a way forward, the New Ireland Forum Report, has made little impression on the situation.

Are there any prospects of the military campaigns of either the IRA or British Direct Rule forces succeeding? If not, what political initiatives can resolve the conflict? Can democratic and economic issues bridge the divided communities? And what action can be pressed on British governments? A panel including speakers actively involved in Northern Ireland will examine the issues.

Art – prisoner of the state?

The 'Glory of the Garden' is the fine-sounding name of the government's 10-year strategy paper for the arts. But the garden will have to get private sponsorship in order to flourish. What is the alternative? The Left has traditionally argued that art will only bloom through major state sponsorship. The Greater London Council has done its bit, giving a glimpse of how the political level can influence the arts.

But this raises issues about selection and indeed censorship in an area where judgements are often confused. So how do artists want the arts to be organised and how can they be given a say? What would a radical approach to the arts really look like.

Participants will include: poet and writer **Micheline Wandor**, **Tony Banks** MP, ex-chair of the GLC Arts and Recreation Committee; **Buchi Emecheta**, the Nigerian novelist who has recently set up her own press *Ogugwu Afor*; **John Pick**, reader in Arts Administration Studies at City University.

Bottomless pit: the media on the miners

Predominant images of the miners' dispute have been of violence, lawlessness and internal division. Causes of the dispute have not been clearly explained, and the strength and solidarity of the mining communities have hardly featured.

Why are these images produced by the media? Has solidarity action by media workers created space for alternative views? And how have the media images been challenged?

A panel will debate the nature of the media coverage of the miners' dispute and will look at what new initiatives have emerged during the dispute to produce different and more radical perspectives.

Speakers will be **Nell Myers**, press officer for the NUM, **Mike Power**, chairperson of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, **Aidan White**, *Guardian* journalist, **Betty Heathfield**, activist in miners support group, **Sandra Horne**, equality officer for ACTT, and **Stuart McKinnon**, member of the Miners Campaign Tape Project.

Is a popular feminism possible?

We are all used to being told that feminism is the politics of an educated middle-class elite, but this is to underestimate its impact on the trade unions, Labour councils, women's magazines and on a growing black women's movement.

Even in the middle of a recession feminism's influence is ever widening. Most recently women in coalfields have shown by their involvement in the dispute and by their support of each other a commitment to feminism's basic principles. Women who would assert that they are not 'women's libbers' are fighting for their rights.

This session brings together women involved in these different areas to talk about their experiences and the problems and possibilities of creating a popular feminism. The panel will be **Jane Hutt**, co-ordinator of Welsh Women's Aid and a Labour councillor, **Inez McCormack**, Northern Ireland



officer for NUPE, and **Jean Miller** of Barnsley Women Against Pit Closures.

Food – measure or pleasure?

'Eat treats – and still lose weight' reads a headline in *Slimmer* magazine. From all sides we are being urged to eat up and enjoy, but keep our bodies healthy and slim. While we worry (and often fall ill), the food industry makes millions. But food is not just about guilt and oppression, it's also a major source of pleasure and delight.

This session looks at some of the contradictions surrounding our attitudes to food and our bodies, and at the role of the food and health industries in our lives today. Speakers include **Rosalind Coward**, lecturer in Visual Communications at Goldsmiths College, London and author of *Female Desire* and **Geoffrey Cannon**, editor of *New Health*.



The class of 1990

The social map of Britain is changing. New class and geographical divisions are occurring as traditional industries decline and the service sector and technologically-advanced industries expand.

How permanent are these changes? Will the human geography of Britain in the 1990s be recognisable to socialists used to operating on the terrain of today? And will these profound social upheavals produce equally significant political effects, requiring new political strategies and new forms of organisation? Class has been a category weighed down by history. This session aims to look at the future.

Unions and Labour: biting on the ballot

The Trade Union Act of 1984, requiring unions representing 6.2 million workers to ballot and win a majority of their members to maintain political links with the Labour Party, confronts the Labour Movement with an unprecedented challenge. Indignation may be a justified response, but some hard questions have to be asked about the state of union/Labour Party links and the genuine depth of political activity within unions.

Speakers will explore the new law's implications for the Labour Movement and the kinds of initiatives urgently needed to rebuild support and political confidence among union members.

Taking part are **Lewis Minkin**, lecturer in politics at Leeds

University, **Pete Carter**, industrial organiser of the Communist Party, **Peter Hain**, vice-chair of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, and **Jack Dromey**, national officer of TGWU.

The church: revisionists and hard-liners at prayer

The churches are very publicly facing the problems of change. While superstar evangelists are shipped in to raise flagging recruitment, arguments have been intensifying on such fundamental questions as the ordination of women and the reality of the resurrection. Concern with issues of war, apartheid, hunger and unemployment are giving Christians a new mission and, in the inner cities, black people are bringing new revivalist fervour to crumbling churches.

This session will be looking at the doctrinal questions dividing church hard-liners from revisionists and asking how much they reflect broader social movements. Do the

upheavals within the churches offer a sign of decay or an opportunity for revival? And, as social issues come increasingly to the fore, can a broad church be a political church?

Revolution and armed struggle in Latin America

Taking as its starting point the Cuban revolution, this session will examine developments and strategies of revolutionary struggle in Latin America. A panel of speakers will discuss the guerrilla movements of the 1960s, Popular Unity in Chile and other broad alliances, the armed struggle in Central America, the eclipse of the military in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, problems of transition in Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada, and the role of peasants and urban workers.

Among those taking part will be **Jenny Pearce**, author of *Under the Eagle* and presently working on a history of El Salvador's peasant movement, **James Dunkerley**, author of books on El Salvador and



Bolivia, and **Brian Pollitt**, lecturer at the Institute of Latin American Studies at Glasgow University.

'Artificial brain' storm

Research on artificial intelligence aims to make computers 'think' like human beings. Some critics see this as the epitome of repressive dehumanising technology. Other

observers see it as an opportunity to make computers more accessible for use and control by ordinary people.

With the massive expansion of state sponsorship for artificial intelligence research through, for example, the Japanese 'Fifth Generation' and the British 'Alvey' programmes it is high time for the Left to put its own intelligence to work on the question.

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Institutionalised anti-racism – help or hindrance?

Can a racist state tackle racism? Is the 'Race Relations Industry', including the Commission for Racial Equality, a hindrance rather than a help to the creation of a united black people's movement in Britain? Or is this a sterile point of view?

This session will look at the role of anti-racist institutions in Britain – does the 'Race Relations Industry' tackle the heart of the problems of racism and, if not, could it do so? How can closer links be built between institutions such as the CRE and grassroots black organisations. Can the 'industry' as a whole play a more active campaigning role in the struggle against racism in Britain?

The discussion will be opened by a range of speakers, including people from the 'Race Relations Industry' and some of its notable critics.



**SUNDAY
MORNING**

Crime and punishment

Law and order has become a major issue during Thatcher's second term. The Home Secretary's statements on crime, mugging and public fear have won widespread support and 'public concern' has been used as a means of justifying further punitive action.

But what alternative strategy has the Left offered? Who should go to prison? What should prison be like? And what causes criminal behaviour in the first place?

The Tory approach and the radical alternatives will be explored by the speakers, barrister **Stephen Sedley** QC, **Clare Short** MP who is a member of the Commons home affairs select committee, **Andrew Rutherford**, senior lecturer in law at Southampton University, and **Pat Carlen**, senior lecturer in law at Keele University.

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MARKET COMPETITION

Left Alive not only provides an opportunity to analyse consumer society – practical experience in consumerism is on offer as well.

A wide array of goods, from jewelry to videos, will be on sale on a series of stalls close to the main events throughout Saturday and Sunday.

This will be no Thatcherite free market however. Only quality goods will be available.

On Sunday there will also be extensive displays and stalls put on by campaigning organisations in City University's New Hall.

To refresh the parts that other sessions cannot reach Left Alive offers a programme of sporting and leisure activities.

Do you studiously avoid organised sport or are too busy attending meetings to take exercise? You need *Left Alive's* revolutionary new concept – taster sessions – designed for complete beginners to introduce you to a range of exciting activities in a painless and enjoyable way:

● **Jazz dance:** Join Nicky from the Pineapple Dance Studios to discover talents you never knew you had. This comprises exercises to keep your body lithe and supple followed by dance routines.
(Sunday lunchtime)

● **Jogging:** Participate in the biggest boom around with experienced runners to take you through gentle warm-up exercises and lead you on a route around some of Marx's old haunts.
(Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes)

● **Martial arts:** For women who want to reclaim the night – learn how to protect yourself at a self-defence session.
(Saturday evening 5.30–7)

● **Trampolining:** Something you always wanted to do but were

too embarrassed. Your chance to hit the springs in a supportive set-up.
(Saturday lunchtime)

● **Volleyball, basketball:** Come alive, feel vital and have fun learning the skills and playing a game.
(Saturday evening 5.30–7, Sunday lunchtime)

● **Body conditioning:** Exercise your way to fitness, improve your stamina and mobility, all to music.
(Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes)

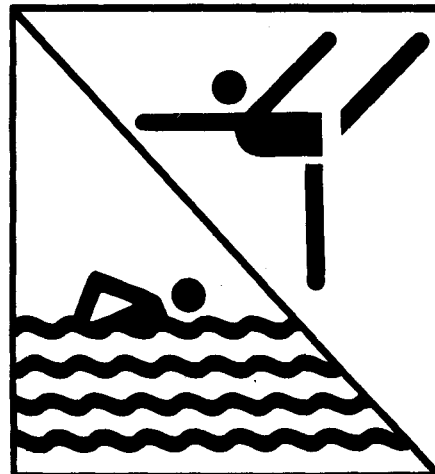
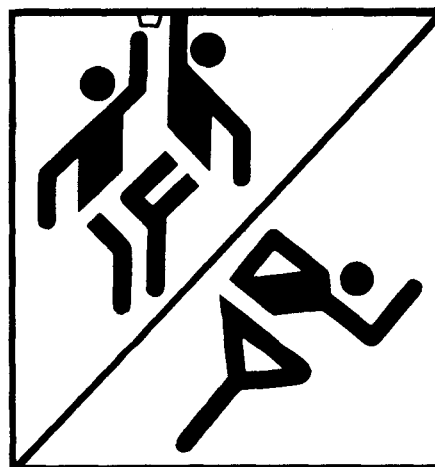
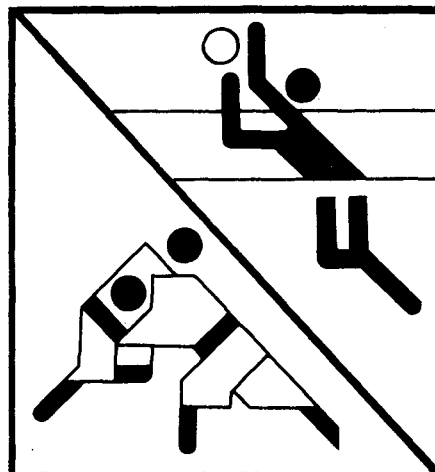
● **Rock climbing:** Tired of keeping your feet on the ground, do you aspire to higher things? Experience the delight of learning to control and balance your body by climbing a wall.
(Saturday evening 5.30–7)

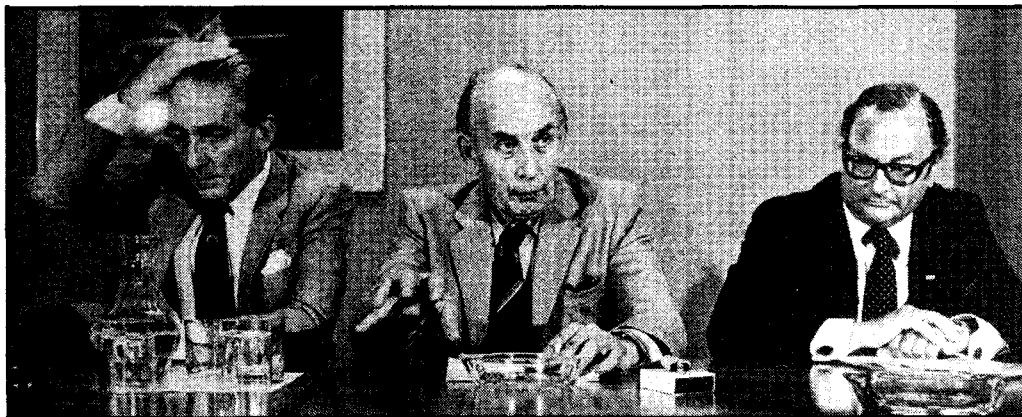
For the already initiated, a chance to play basketball or volleyball, revive yourself with a swim, tackle a route from easy to very severe on the climbing wall or take to the streets for a jogging session.

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– EXERCISE – THE BODY POLITIC





A strategy for the TUC

Unemployment and Thatcherism have thrown the TUC into a state of uncertainty and disarray. Trade union leaders are no longer welcome at No. 10. Industrial defeats have become the rule rather than the exception and trade unionists deserted Labour in droves at the last election. A wave of Tory legislation is also having a profound effect on British trade unionism.

One response to this is 'new realism'. Another is the miners' strike. In this session a number of leading trade unionists will discuss what the problems are and what strategy the TUC should adopt as an answer. Among participants will be **Jack Dromey**, TGWU national officer.

Outside Left – still on the wings?

'Leftism', or more specifically Trotskyism, has a long history in Britain's labour movement. Its influence has grown significantly in the last 20 years and now may well be greater than in any comparable country. Controversy over the role of organisations like Militant has raged on the Left and beyond.

This session will examine how British Trotskyism has maintained its significance. How does it relate to fundamentalist approaches to political issues elsewhere on the Left? And what do the weaknesses of its positions reveal about the Left's theoretical approach more generally?

Speakers will include **John Callaghan**, author of *British*

Trotskyism: Theory and Practice, and **Monty Johnstone**, a member of the Communist Party's theory and ideology committee.



Soap opera – soft soap or social comment?

The story so far. Soap opera was long ago dismissed by enlightened opinion as a mind-rotting form of broadcasting. The snag was that this view did not filter through to the millions of followers.

Then along came feminists to defend programmes like *Brookside* and argue that the audiences, mainly women, should not be denigrated.

So now to this session and a chance to tie up some loose ends in the plot. What keeps women hooked and how do soap operas represent lifestyles, class, gender and race? How do actors identify with the characters and publicity – can they cope with the real images? And do they have any control over character development?

The panel will include **Rosalind Brunt**, lecturer in communication and women's studies, **Tony Booth**, formerly in *Till Death Us Do Part*, and **Richard Dyer**, lecturer in film studies at Warwick University.

Socialist economies: signals at red?

In the 1930s, while the rest of the world was in deep depression, the Soviet Union was industrialising fast in contrast to capitalist crisis.

Fifty years on, the socialist economies of the USSR and Eastern Europe face serious problems. Depression in the world economy has compounded the effects of internal weaknesses and mistakes. The best that can be expected is slow growth for the next few years.

What are the prospects for the future? Will the socialist economies demonstrate their lasting vitality? Or will other countries follow Poland in economic catastrophe? What are the chances of new initiatives from the Soviet leadership? Will there be new economic reforms? Will economic difficulties trigger sweeping political changes? Speakers discussing these questions will include **Włodzimierz Brus**, a leading Polish economist living in Britain, **Julian Cooper** from the Birmingham Centre for Russian and East European Studies and **Alec Nove**, author of *The Economics of Feasible Socialism*.

Putting people back into society

Something's a stir in Britain today.

The schisms of our society – class, racism, sexism and ageism – are being challenged and, more importantly, pierced.

Beyond the slogans and rhetoric people are together beginning to re-order things. It's as if the tundra is appearing from the ice-floes of the recession.

An informal reallocation of resources is taking place – in health care, among women, job creation, young blacks, leisure and much more.

In this session we will be turning the spotlight on to Britain's 'other' political activity. Many uncomfortable and difficult questions will be posed. The answers could be even more disturbing.

Taking as its starting point a discussion of local health care initiatives, job creation projects and ventures for women the session will move into probing the strategic significance for the Left.

The panel will include **Geoff Green** from Sheffield City Council and **Sue Dowling**, author of *Health for a Change*.

The struggle within the struggle

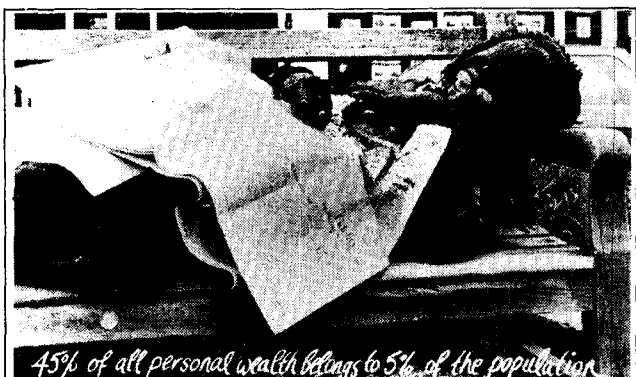
Over 15 years after the emergence of the women's liberation movement, feminists are active across the spectrum of left political parties, the trade unions and other progressive organisations and campaigns.

But making headway is heavy going. The pressure is always on to shelve the conflicts in the name of 'unity'. This session will look at the strategies feminists are adopting to



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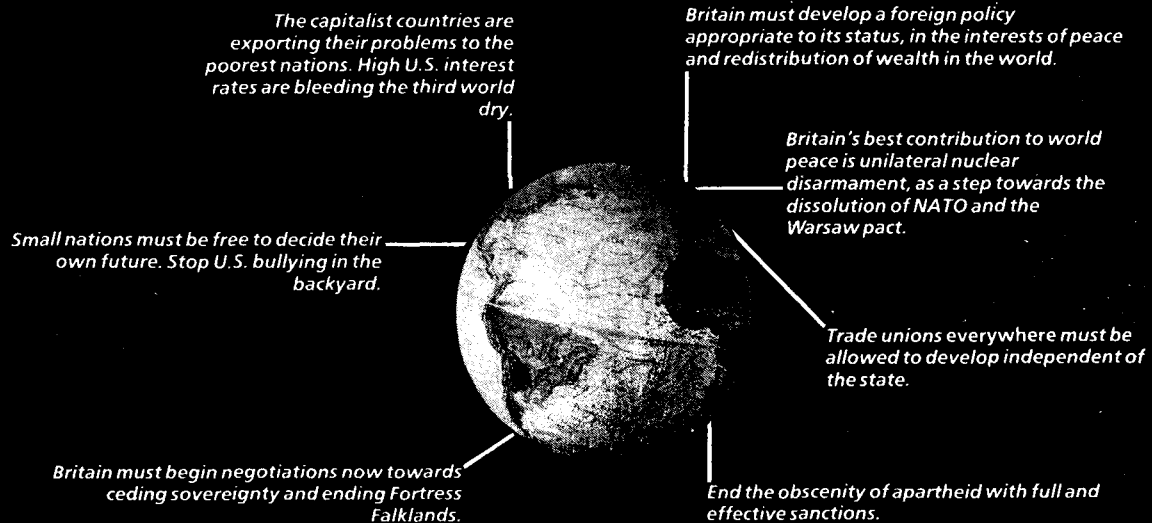
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advance women's liberation in such conditions.

The panel will include **Tricia Davis**, a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party and full-time NALGO officer, Labour women's action committee secretary **Ann Pettifor** and **June Abdoolrhomon**, NUPE women's officer.

Whatever happened to Eurocommunism?

The death of Italian Communist leader Enrico Berlinguer gave cause for widespread reflection on the condition and achievements of Eurocommunism. Alliances, democracy and pluralism were the emphases of the framework which Berlinguer did so much to create. But diverse developments followed in the Communist Parties of such countries as France, Spain and Italy. Challenges have come both from capitalist crisis and the emergence of 'Eurosocialism' as a powerful electoral force.

This session considers the emergence of Eurocommunism, why it raised such high hopes among socialists and whether these hopes have been dashed. What contribution can it make now to developing socialist strategy and a conception of future socialist societies?

Speakers include **Göran Therborn**, professor of politics at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, Holland and author of *What Does The Ruling Class Do When It Rules?*, **Martin Jacques**, editor of *Marxism Today*, and a leading member of the Italian Communist Party.

Simplemente Maria?

In July 1983 more than 7,000 women gathered in Lima to discuss the Latin American feminist movement. In December of the same year 4,000 Chilean women crowded into one of Santiago's theatres for a protest rally. Elsewhere, in Nicaragua, Cuba and El Salvador, women are struggling to put their needs on the political agenda. What has brought about these events, unprecedented in cultures not known for their liberated attitudes to women? How do the women themselves see their struggle for liberation? Is there a role for an independent women's movement? And how can feminist gains be carried into and beyond the national liberation struggles?

Contributing to this session are **Catalina Palma**, Chilean feminist living in exile, and other women active in the Latin American feminist and solidarity movements.

Multicultural education: opium or opportunity?

'Multicultural' education is a growth area. Is it part of a strategy aimed at pacifying discontented black pupils without tackling the real problems? Is it aimed at defusing an active struggle to change class and racial oppression and thus a diversion to be rejected outright?

Or could it begin to tackle both open and hidden racism, and challenge 'white' knowledge and forms of oppression operating through the exclusion of other cultural experiences and other

languages? Can such an approach be successful in the existing system?

The session will attempt to explore these problems and to relate them to wider issues, particularly to the question of devising an anti-racist strategy capable of linking up with other social forces and movements also seeking radical social change.

Speakers will be ILEA advisory teacher **Peter Traves** and **Kum Bhavnani** who has worked widely with black and anti-racist groups.

Space – the final frontier

Scientific inquiry beyond the frontiers of planet Earth has profound social implications which are both practical and philosophical – from the threat of star wars to theoretical conflicts over the nature of the cosmos.

These issues touch key aspects of public concern as evidenced by the popular fascination with presentations of science fact and fiction. This session will probe some of the major debates.



People, politics and PR

Some eyebrows shot up when Eric Hobsbawm last year warned that Margaret Thatcher could yet be elected for a third term because of divisions in the 'anti-Tory' vote.

For some this problem of the electoral system raises talk of coalitions and electoral pacts; others see electoral reform and proportional representation as a necessary stage in creating a new politics; and others see both as a diversion from the revolution or from strong government. A panel will look at the politics underlying calls for electoral change. Can coalitions be democratic or are they a recipe for sell-out and reformist evasion?

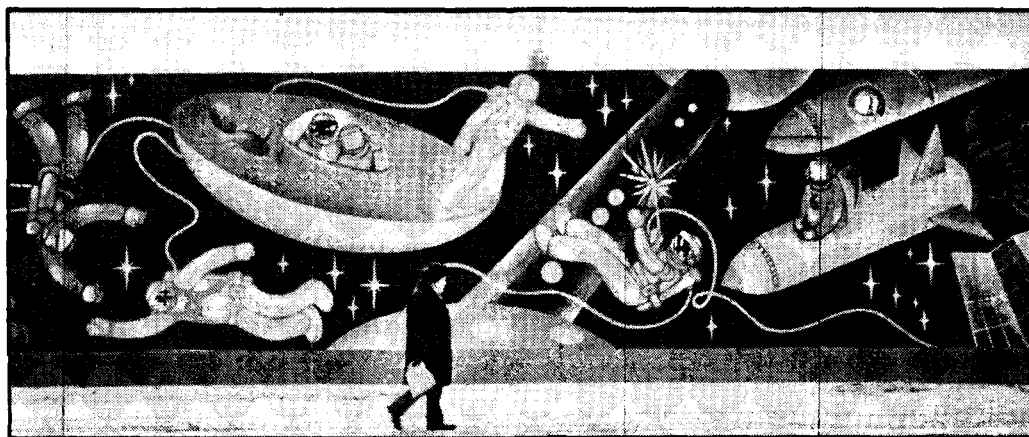
Would PR lead to stable centrist government? Or could it begin to create a new kind of participatory politics? Would the Tory and Labour hegemonies of the Right and Left crumble?

Or is it all irrelevant to real politics?

The *New Statesman's* political editor **Peter Kellner** will be in the chair and speakers will include former Labour MP **Philip Whitehead**, Communist lecturer **Pat Devine**, Liberal MP **Simon Hughes** and **Charles Moore** editor of the *Spectator*.

Thatcherism and the Left

Since the election things have not been hunky-dory for Margaret Thatcher. Could Thatcherism be on the ebb, or are things much as they were? More to the point, what has the Left got to learn from the success of the Thatcherite project and what conclusions should we



draw from these experiences for the Left's own renewal. **Stuart Hall**, professor of sociology at the Open University, and **Bob Rowthorn**, reader in economics at Cambridge University and member of the *Marxism Today* editorial board, discuss where we're at and where we should go.

CND explosion: the fall-out

CND is starting to win the argument as recent opinion polls show. The middle ground is moving toward the peace campaigners, bringing with it an unusual problem on the Left — success.

CND now has to maintain the momentum. Can it continue in the same way? What new initiatives and campaigns are needed?

Also in question is what relationship CND should have with other grassroots movements, the political parties and the whole political process. How has British politics been changed by CND's success? Have CND's structure and style altered our vision of the future?

Speakers include **James Hinton**, chair of the projects committee of national CND, **Joy Hurcombe**, vice-chair of national CND, **Sarah Benton**, deputy editor of *New Statesman*, and **John Cox**, Communist Party Executive Committee member.



Angela Carter

Angela Carter, who will be talking about her work, has been described as 'the most consistently interesting and original writer of British fiction today'. In language ranging from the baroque to the tersely witty she describes a magical and highly erotic world.

For the overriding importance she places on sexuality, she claims justification from the women's movement. But her fantasy vision is unique and dates back into the 60s before her awakening to feminism. Among her most recent fiction are *The Passion of New Eve* and *The Bloody Chamber*.

Nothing Sacred, a collection of her journalism, has also been published, earning her the accolade of 'one of the most stimulating and original social commentators writing today'.



East and West square up

The absence of the Soviet Union together with a number of its allies from the Olympic Games served as a poignant symbol of the depths to which East-West relations have sunk. The recent toning-down in the stridency of President Reagan's cold war rhetoric has more to do with electoral strategy than a revival of detente, while the Soviet Union's antagonism towards the West has been reflected in the hostility with which it has viewed signs of an East-West German rapprochement.

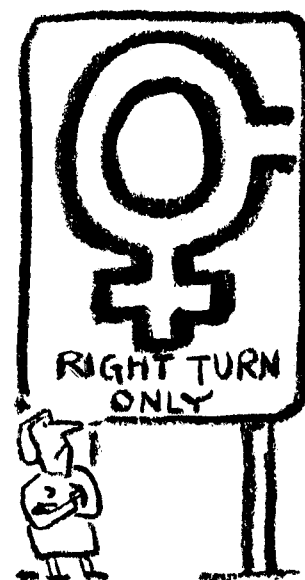
Signs of great power conflict also continue to emerge throughout the world, from the Middle East to Latin America, from southern Africa to South East Asia. What is the impetus behind this dangerous stalemate? And what are the prospects for a thaw in relations? Speakers include **Fred Halliday**, author of *The Making of the Second Cold War*.

Breaking school rules

In the last ten years, teachers and comprehensive schools have come under a constant barrage of criticism. Yet comprehensive education has raised standards and is strongly supported by parents and pupils. Now the government, having failed to win support for the reintroduction of selective schools, is trying a new tactic. Sir Keith Joseph wants control of the curriculum and is trying to take power away from teachers and local authorities.

The new 16-plus exam is aimed at

reimposing selection within the comprehensive system, with students again being forced into categories which will determine their future lives. This session will be exploring ways of challenging the Government's initiatives, and discussing the Left's alternative education policies. Speakers include **Brian Simon**, author of *Intelligence, Psychology and Education*.

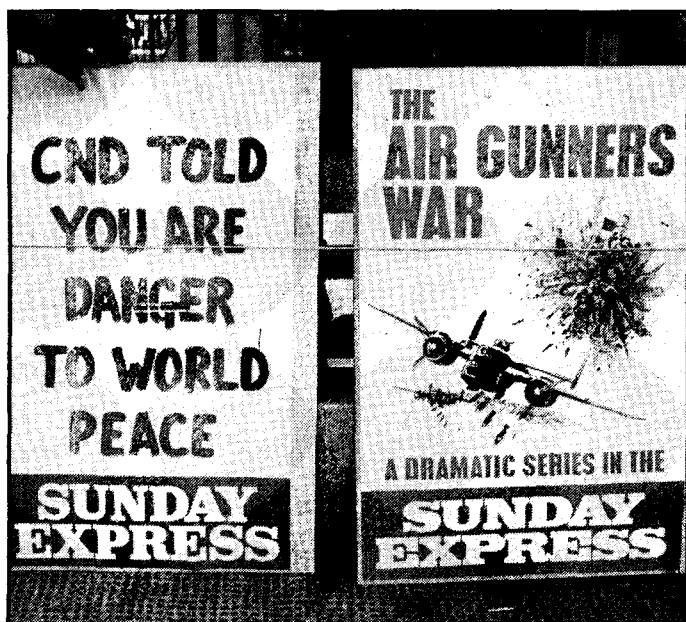


Women and the Right

Women have traditionally been labelled as more conservative than men. It has even been suggested that the Right has a particular appeal to women. But there are also signs that voting patterns are changing and women may be a radical not a conservative force in politics.

Is it true that the Right appeals more directly to women's experiences than the Left? This session will be looking at the Right and women's experiences today, at the effect of the contemporary women's movement on the way women vote and at the involvement of women in right-wing politics.

Among those taking part will be **Sarah Benton**, Deputy Editor of the *New Statesman* and **Ann Robinson**, lecturer in politics at University College Cardiff and an active Conservative.



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The re-emergence of a Marxist approach to the social sciences over the last ten years has influenced the development of urban and regional studies no less than other fields.

This book investigates the consequences of crisis over a range of interrelated economic, social and political issues, where these issues coalesce in the production of geographical change. It is because of changes in such social processes that cities and regions change in character, and perhaps become redundant. Yet it is also very much a theme of the book that particular social processes are shaped by the character of the cities and regions in which they take place. Hence, a full understanding of crisis requires analysis at the urban and regional level. The contributions provide a broad coverage of the arguments within a specific situation: industrial decline in Britain.

A volume in **Applied Language Studies Series**

LINGUISTIC MINORITIES, POLICIES AND PLURALISM Edited by John Edwards

June 1984, 344pp., \$48.00/£32.00 (UK only), ISBN: 0-12-232760-8

In this book the contributors attempt an objective assessment of linguistic minority groups in Canada, Britain, Australia and the United States. The relationship between language and identity and the pluralism-assimilation question are a particular focus. Education and other policies are considered in detail as these affect minority-majority relations. Earlier work is reviewed and historical trends are used to give new insights into the issues. The authors deal with language planning, ethnic separatist movements, immigrant and 'guest-worker' populations and they put forward educational programmes to serve the cause of cultural and linguistic pluralism.

A Volume in the **Studies in Political Economy Series**

THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF BACKWARD AGRICULTURE Amit Bhaduri

December 1983, 164pp., \$30.00/£19.50 (UK only), ISBN: 0-12-095420-6

The *Economic Structure of Backward Agriculture* has been written to bridge the gap between the historical and analytical approaches to the problem of undeveloped agrarian economies.

Professor Bhaduri presents the backwardness of agriculture set in a social, rather than a technocratic perspective, and uses techniques of mathematical modelling to highlight general patterns. These patterns are then discussed in terms of developments in social history.

Writing from his experiences of the Indian sub-continent, Professor Bhaduri has produced a work which will be of great interest to researchers and graduate students in development economics and economic history, especially of the Third World.

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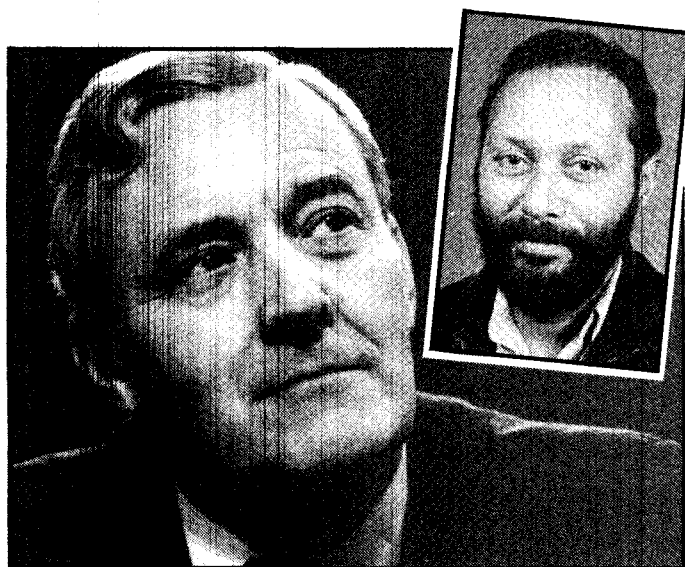
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The Tories and prospects for Labour

The return of Margaret Thatcher for a second term in 1983 was a major blow to Labour.

But the successes of the GLC and the support for the miners' struggle suggest a recovery of popular support for the Labour Party.

Tony Benn, a member of the Labour Party NEC, and **Stuart Hall**, professor of sociology at the Open University, take a fresh look at some of the issues involved in the prospects for Labour. Thatcherism, the nature of the working class, alliances, and how we can extend popular support for the Labour Movement will be among the subjects under discussion.

Communists and Labour – new perspectives?

The 1980s have created new problems for the Left and both Labour and the Communist Party have suffered setbacks. What role do both parties have in the revival of the Left's fortunes? Participating in this debate will be **Gordon McLennan**, general secretary of the Communist Party, **Nigel Stanley**, previously organising secretary of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, **Christopher Hird** of Channel Four's *Diverse Reports*, and **Tricia Davis**, member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party.

Drugs – the 80s overdose

Once a phenomenon of the liberated 60s, drugs have again hit the headlines. In the depressed 80s the problems are very different, centring on the young people of the inner cities.

What are the forces behind the demand for heroin and the Third World supply of the plant material? And, with sexual divisions structuring both legal and illegal drug problems, what is the relationship of women to drugs? How do women respond to drug problems?

Opening discussion on the issues and responses will be **Dr Betsy Ettore**, sociologist and researcher in drugs and alcohol, **Jean White**, a senior alcohol counsellor, and members of the Liverpool Trades Union, Community and

Unemployed Resource Centre. Video will be used to illustrate the problems.

Lib-Lab contact

What is the way out of the Thatcher years? The Liberal and Labour Parties offer very different perspectives – not surprisingly considering that many in the two parties lay claim to conflicting and mutually exclusive philosophies.

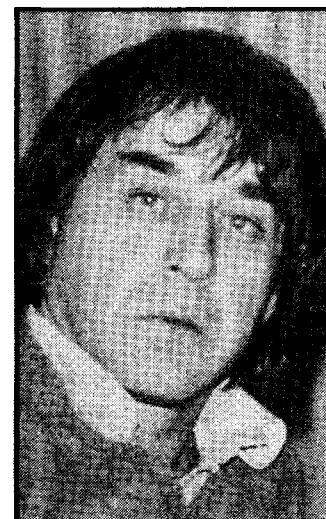
Some suggest that Labour's vision is unrealistic, and that the Liberal vision is no sound alternative to Thatcherism. This session looks at the alternatives put forward by Labour and the Liberals and explores the points of contact and difference between the two parties. Putting their rival approaches will be **Clare Short**, Labour MP for Birmingham Ladywood, and **Michael Meadowcroft**, Liberal MP for Leeds West.

Has work a future?

A question mark hangs over the future of work. Unemployment remains stubbornly above three million, manufacturing industry continues its rapid decline, and new technology promises to decimate jobs at an unprecedented rate.

The new jobs being created are often low-paid and part-time. Their location is also changing. Manufacturing industry is leaving the big cities and starting up in small towns, away from the heartlands of the organised labour movement.

These developments raise major questions for the Left; what do we mean by full employment? Can we get back to it? What types of jobs are people going to be doing in the future? How important will work be for people? And what are the implications for the labour movement? Grappling with these issues will be a panel of speakers including **Doreen Massey**, professor of geography at the Open University.



Trevor Griffiths

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television and films as well as the theatre.

He wrote the screenplay for *Reds* and his other writing includes *Comedians*, *Country* and *The Party*. He will be talking and answering questions about his work.

Poor lore – poverty in the 80s

Poverty is now massive in extent. One in two of the working class can expect to be poor some time in their life. But poverty is not simply a lack of money; it involves problems of powerlessness, political invisibility and the breakdown of communities. One key issue is the failure of the Left (or indeed any political party) to have any organic links with the poor.

Among the key strategic questions are how to tackle poverty in the 80s and beyond, how to get popular support for a really progressive tax system and higher benefits, how the Left can break through the crisis of representation among the poor, and how the poor can develop political campaigning against their own poverty.

Contributors will include **Merle Amory**, Labour Councillor for Brent in London, and **Peter Golding**, research associate at the Centre for Mass Communication Research, Leicester University and co-author of *Images of Welfare*.

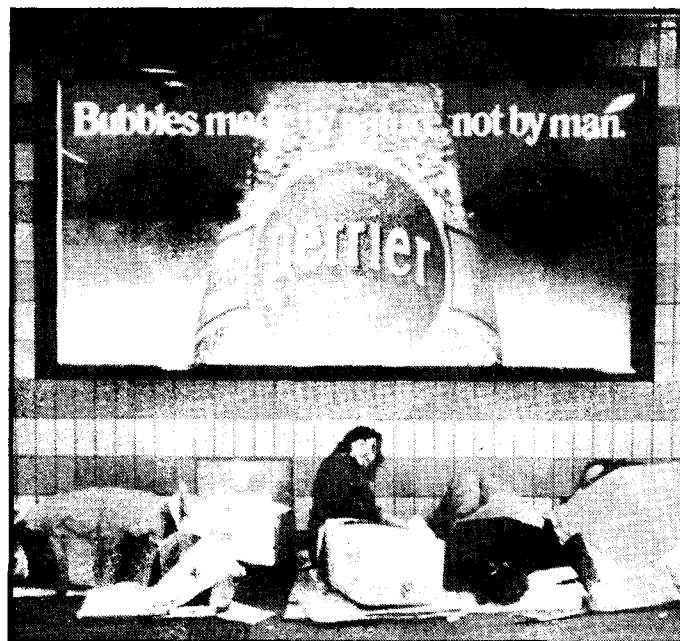
New strategies in southern Africa

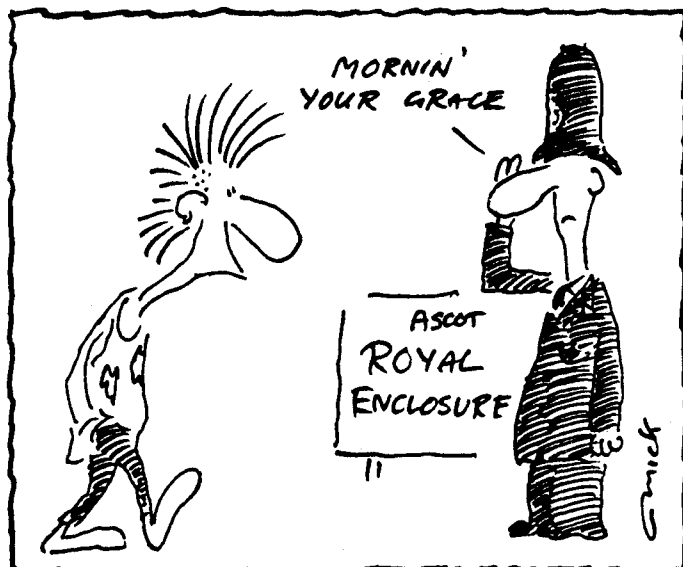
1984 has seen South Africa at the negotiating table with its neighbour Mozambique. The tactic of military destabilisation and economic sabotage has changed to one of 'peaceful coexistence' and economic investment.

Mozambique had long been seeking a security pact with South Africa and in March, the Nkomati Accord was finally signed. Was it, as Chester Crocker, US Secretary of State for Africa, would have it, a body blow to the armed struggle in South Africa? And can Mozambique's socialist development policies survive reliance on South African investment?

The session will analyse the reasons behind South Africa's recent agreements with its neighbours, Mozambique and Angola, and discuss the implications for the front-line states, for the future of Namibia and for the struggle within South Africa itself.

The panel of speakers discussing these issues includes **Basil Davidson**, whose recent work included writing and presenting Channel Four's series on Africa earlier this year, and **Keith Somerville**, writer on African economic affairs.





A question of style

A revolution in fashion is going on. Designer labels are no longer for the rich and ostentatious, but are an obsession with the young and poor. The high street rather than haute couture is the source of new ideas, and styles of dress proliferate.

Why is style the byword of today? Are the generously cut and unrestricted styles of Warehouse a response to women's changing lifestyles? And why is dress so important today in the identity of the young?

A panel of people from inside and outside the world of fashion will be discussing these and other questions of style, and assessing the revolution in fashion in Britain today. These include **Brenda Polan**, fashion writer for the *Guardian*, and **Angela McRobbie**, writer and researcher on feminism, fashion and youth culture.

Lesbian and gay rights: where is the Left?

The last decade has seen major advances for lesbian and gay communities, with a number of trade unions and Labour councils supporting positive gay rights policies, and the communities themselves growing in social, and political, presence. Yet the move to the Right has increased worries about police harassment and

anti-gay violence, and the cutbacks and unemployment are threatening the gains of the last few years.

How much of a setback is this move to the Right? And what should be the response of the Left given its past inability, or unwillingness, to challenge the privileges of heterosexuality and attract gays and lesbians to its ranks?

Among the speakers discussing these and other issues are **Elizabeth Wilson**, author of *Mirror Writing* and lecturer in social policy, and **Jeffrey Weeks**, writer and activist in gay politics and lecturer in social work studies at Southampton University. The award-winning film *Framed Youth* will be shown during this session.

Europe on the defensive

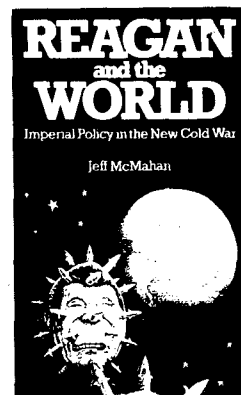
Signs of strain are showing within the alliances that currently dominate Europe. Some European NATO countries have sought to distance themselves from the 'United States' most aggressive anti-Soviet initiatives, while some Warsaw Pact countries have displayed unease at the growing political and economic costs of the new Cold War. Independent European proposals to break the deadlock have been floated, such as a no-first-use declaration.

Speakers will be examining the future of the military blocs in

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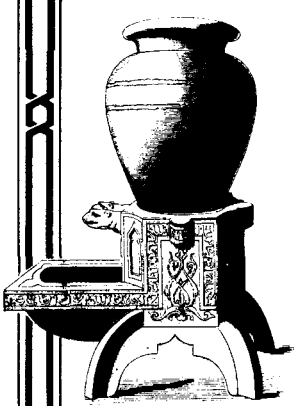
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Europe. What are the prospects for a genuine reduction in tension and what new defence configurations might develop? What are the possibilities for independent initiatives by European countries to restore detente? And how can the peace movement help?

Participants will include **Meg Beresford**, vice-president of CND, and **Jon Bloomfield**, a member of CND's national council and international committee.



The miners' strike

At the time of going to press the miners are approaching six months on strike with no end in sight. It looks like being the longest national miners' strike this century. And it has been a remarkable event.

Depending on the precise circumstances at the time of Left Alive, this session will look at the causes and objectives of the strike, the women's support groups, involvement of the mining communities, the strategy informing the strike, and likely outcomes and their implications. Participants will include **Michael McGahey**, vice-president of the NUM, **John Lloyd**, Labour Editor of the *Financial Times*, and a speaker

from the women's support groups.

Third World - second thoughts

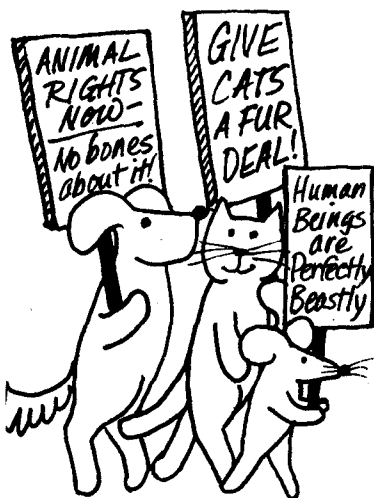
'Little Englandism' and 'the white man's burden' are uppermost in Left views of a future Labour government's policies affecting developing countries.

Economic strategy ideas usually entail a rapid reflationary push with traditional industry barricaded against cheap imports which are mistakenly seen as mainly coming from the Third World.

Such attitudes are often given a Left gloss by rhetoric about unfair competition using 'sweated labour' and by nationalistic wingeing on the

theme of a global conspiracy by multinationals. The wide array of groups campaigning over Third World poverty has few points of contact with these reactionary positions. However the groups' moralistic stress on the consumption gap between rich and poor nations is not a satisfactory basis for socialist policies.

Sheila Smith, lecturer in development economics at Sussex University, **John Sender** and **John Wells**, who both teach development economics at Cambridge University, will outline some alternative principles from which to plan the growth of trade, aid and investment and which would expand the possibilities of change in developing countries.



Human freedom, animal rights - one struggle, one fight?

We're all concerned about human rights, but what about animal rights? Why should the Left bother about animals - hasn't it got enough on its plate already?

This session looks at the issue of animal rights and the relationship between animals and human society. The links between animal exploitation and the profits system, and connections between the animal rights movement, peace and war, feminism and broader political issues will be discussed by a panel of speakers involved in the animal rights movement.

Kim Stallwood is Campaigns Officer for the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection and is on the National Council of the RSPCA, **Valerie Veness** is Deputy Leader of Islington Council, which recently adopted an 'Animals Charter', and **Andrew Linington** is active in animal rights groups including BUAV and the Hunt Saboteurs Association.

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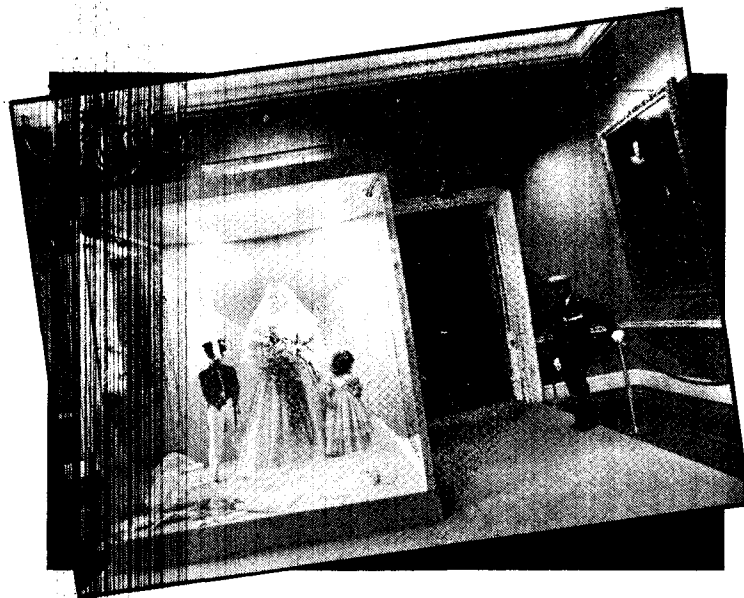
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potential of attractions to rival the Royal spectacles.

Speakers include **Sally George**, who is researching on the Royal Family at the Institute of Education, **Rosalind Brunt**, lecturer in communication and women's studies at Sheffield and contributor to *Marxism Today* on Royalty, and a representative from Republic, an anti-monarchist organisation.

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The Function of Criticism argues that criticism emerged in early bourgeois society as a central feature of the 'public sphere' in which political, ethical and

literary judgements could mingle under the benign rule of reason. The disintegration of this fragile culture brought on a crisis in criticism, whose history since the 18th century has been one fraught with ambivalence and anxiety. Eagleton's account embraces Addison and Steele, Johnson and the 19th century reviewers, critics such as Arnold and Stephen, the heyday of *Scrutiny* and New Criticism, and finally the recent proliferation of literary theories, especially deconstructionism.

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Jean-Paul Sartre THE WAR DIARIES: Notes from a Phoney War 1939-1940

Found among his papers after his death, the *War Diaries* are among Sartre's most brilliant writings. Stationed in his native Alsace as a radio operator during the phoney war that preceded the invasion of France in 1940, he employed his time - often during the night shift - making an extra-

ordinary series of notes on philosophy, art, politics and literature. In terms of sheer literary verve and readability, they anticipate and often surpass his later work.

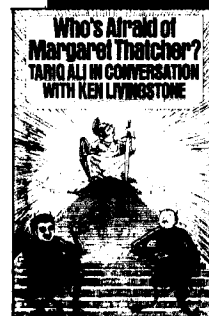
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Tariq Ali and Ken Livingstone WHO'S AFRAID OF MARGARET THATCHER

Britain's most controversial politician, leader of the GLC and Labour's socialist left, here talks about the political

strategy and the prospects for the left with the most charismatic figure to have emerged from the generation of 1968. Tariq Ali asks searching questions about the Labour Party - from which he is barred - in these relaxed conversations recorded in April and May 1984.

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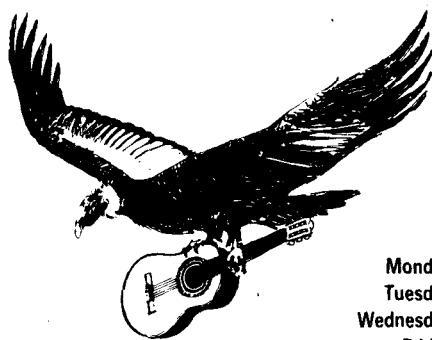
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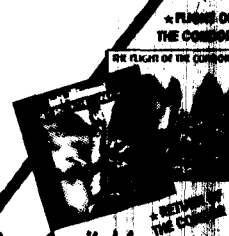
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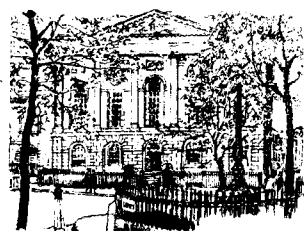


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OUT & ABOUT

LEFT ALIVE takes place in an area where the Left has been alive for centuries, though with mixed results. Just down the road, peasants' leader Watt Tyler was summarily dispatched on the site of Smithfield meat market in 1381,

without even having the chance of a session to debate 'the forward march of peasants halted'. More recently, Clerkenwell Green was a centre for demonstrations in the 19th century, and the Marx Memorial Library on the Green was the home of the Twentieth Century Press, the first British socialist press. Lenin also edited *Iskra* there in 1902-3.



Middlesex Court of Sessions

Clerkenwell, with an Italian church and shops, is also known as Little Italy and provided shelter for Mazzini, the leader of 19th century Italian revolutionary republicanism – a stepping stone to Eurocommunism. Today the local council, Islington, is a radical socialist borough, frequently reviled by the media. The Communist Party's headquarters are in St John Street, close to the *Morning Star* in Farringdon Road.

The forces of repression are represented by the imposing old Middlesex Court of Sessions, now a masonic conference centre, at Clerkenwell Green. On the Green Oliver Twist was supposed to have been taught pick-pocketing by



Marx Memorial Library

Fagin. Skilled trades continue around the Green today in craft workshops.

The arts are well provided for by Sadler's Wells Theatre, whose history goes back over 200 years, and the modern Barbican Centre. Further north is the Camden Passage Antiques Market. Notable local gatherings include the foundation meeting of the Labour Party in Farringdon Street in 1900 and now, of course, *Left Alive*.

STAYING ALIVE

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Crown Tavern, 43 Clerkenwell Green EC1. *Wethered*, good selection of cheeses, music upstairs some evenings.

Empress of Russia, 362 St John Street EC1. *Wethered*, good selection of cheeses, music upstairs some evenings.

Fountain, 68 Amwell Street EC1. *Taylor Walker*, Victorian atmosphere, opens at 7 on Saturdays.

Old Red Lion, 418 St John Street EC1. *Bass*, fringe theatre, large bar.

Sekforde Arms, 34 Sekforde Street EC1. *Everard*, *Fullers*, good pub, range of beers.

Shakespeares Head, 1 Arlington Way EC1. *Courage*, next to Sadler's Wells, theatrical atmosphere.

Island Queen, 87 Noel Road N1. *Charrington*, trendy but nice. Huge puppets dominate the bar.

King of Beasts, 65 Graham Street N1. *Islington Bitter*, brews its own lethal mixture.

Kings Head, 115 Upper Street N1. *Taylor Walker*, theatre upstairs, charges made out in pre-decimal money, trendy.

Pint Pot, 1 Liverpool Road N1. *Bass*, music most evenings.

Crown and Woolpack, 394 St John Street EC1. *Directors*, collections of pottery, opens 6.30 on Saturday.

EATING

The figure in brackets is an average for a good meal and a couple of drinks.

Marinella Trattoria and Pizzeria, 42 St John Street EC1 (€5). Small but excellent Italian.

Ballerina Restaurant, corner Rosebery Avenue/St John Street EC1 (€5). Italian and English food, limited range, inexpensive.

Mr Bumble, 23 Islington Green N1 (€10). Traditional English food at good quality.

Solo Pasta, 26 Liverpool Road N1 (€8). Very good Italian, recommended pasta dishes.

Trattoria Agualino, 31 Camden Passage N1 (€6-7). Good Italian food at remarkable prices.

Kolossi Grill, 36 Rosebery Avenue EC1 (€6). Small but quality Greek restaurant.

Athena Kebab House, 26 Penton Street N1 (€5). Usual range of Greek dishes at competitive prices.

Serendipity, Camden Passage N1 (€7). Varied menu described as international.

Uppers Bistro, 349 Upper Street N1 (€6). Mixed menu, reasonable value.

Pizza Express, 337 Upper Street N1 (€4). Dozens of different pizzas to client's taste.

Deep Pan Pizza Company, 62 Upper Street N1 (€4). Opposite to and very much as the above.

Mr A's, 48 Upper Street N1 (€2). Various exciting sandwiches around the clock.

Master Chow, 22 Penton Street N1 (€8). Peking and Szechuan, excellent food, a little expensive.

Sonagaon Restaurant, 46 Upper Street N1 (€7-8). South Indian cuisine of high quality.

Parveen Tandoori, 6 Theberton Street N1 (€7). Good food at reasonable

prices.

Upper Street Fish Shop, 324 Upper Street N1 (€3). Excellent chip shop, off licence opposite.

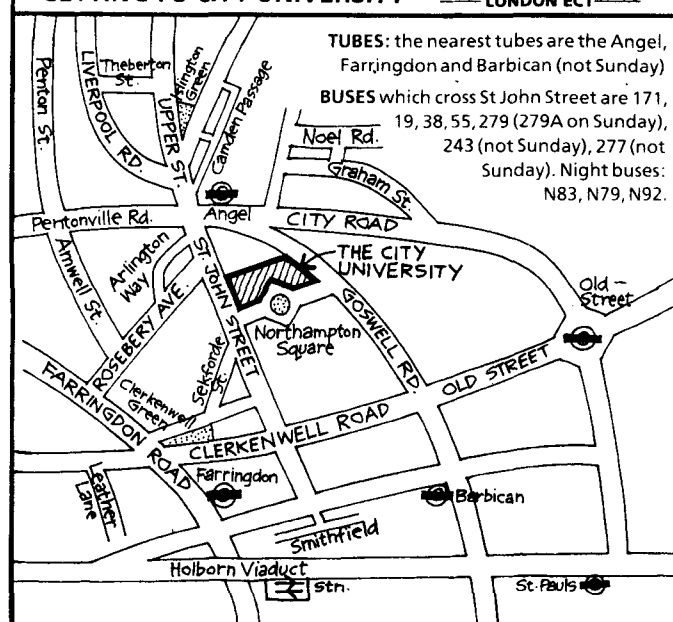
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In commemoration of its 50th anniversary, **NCCL** published its **Charter of Civil Rights and Liberties**, along with the names of over 1300 men and women who signed it, on 22 February this year.

Since that time 1984 has more than lived up to its reputation. The police have been given unprecedented powers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. Trade unions were banned at Cheltenham. Sarah Tisdall was imprisoned for six months. Travelling across the country has been restricted during the miners' strike, and much much more.

Amidst growing national alarm, **NCCL** will once again publish the Charter in **THE GUARDIAN** on Human Rights Day, 10 December 1984, along with the names of those who sign it. We ask you to support this Charter: the more support it receives, the stronger its message will be. If you signed and helped publish it at the beginning of the year, we invite you to do so again as 1984 ends. If you have never publicly endorsed the Charter, we urge you to do so now.

OF ALL YEARS, DON'T LET 1984 GO BY WITHOUT TAKING A STAND ON CIVIL LIBERTIES.

NCCL CHARTER OF CIVIL RIGHTS & LIBERTIES

WE ARE
COMMITTED TO
THE DEFENCE
& EXTENSION
OF CIVIL
LIBERTIES IN
THE UNITED
KINGDOM

& TO THE RIGHTS
& FREEDOMS
RECOGNISED BY
INTERNATIONAL
LAW.

IN PARTICULAR,
WE ARE PLEDGED
TO ENSURE
& SAFEGUARD
THESE ESSENTIAL
RIGHTS:-

1

to live in freedom and safe
from personal harm

2

to protection from
ill-treatment or punishment
that is inhuman or degrading

3

to equality before the law and
to freedom from discrimination
on such grounds as disability,
political or other opinion,
race, religion, sex, or sexual
orientation.

4

to protection from arbitrary
arrest and unnecessary
detention, the right to a fair,
speedy and public trial, to be
presumed innocent until proved
guilty, and to legal advice
and representation.

5

to a fair hearing before any
authority exercising power
over the individual.

6

to freedom of thought,
conscience and belief.

7

to freedom of speech and
publication.

8

to freedom of peaceful
assembly and association.

9

to move freely within one's
country of residence and to
leave and enter it without
hindrance.

10

to privacy and the right of
access to official information.

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1984
FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY 1934-1984

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You acknowledge the Church as a moral, social and political fortress of the state and at the same time affirm that it cannot give a lead other than by way of a dependence on organised christian groups or intellectuals to provide a focus of attention to forces of change.

I hope I'm not giving too much of an impression of the first part. The Church will always, as far as I can see, be in an ambiguous position. The principal role of the Church is twofold. First, to keep on pointing to the judgement of God – so it ought to be a disturbing influence. Secondly, to be as understanding and as sympathetic as possible of all the different positions people take with regard both to this judgement and to political problems.

On the whole the Church of England has preferred to be content with the ambiguous position and has not been a sufficiently disturbing element. It ought to be more of a disturber, constantly drawing attention, for example, to the obscenity of nuclear weapons and having nothing to do with any suggestion that it could be morally right. It may be politically inevitable but you have to get out of the inevitability as soon as you can. Equally it should be drawing attention to the way in which, if you go for nothing but the profit motive, then you are betraying your love for your neighbour. How you work it out is another question and Christians, like anyone else, can't necessarily agree about that.

You were previously Director of Humanum Studies at the World Council of Churches. How do you think the Church of England has responded to the radical efforts of the WCC in such areas as racialism, Latin America and apartheid?

It has actually responded almost more than we might have expected but perhaps not as much as we might have hoped for. I think that the climate of opinion about many of the World Council of Churches' initiatives has steadily changed over the years. That has to be set against the conservative reaction we are talking about, but, on the other hand, there is much more discussion of these more radical ideas in places like the Deanery Synods.

The main point we've got to tackle is that people suppose, if you are being christian, that you will somehow be soothing and comforting in a bland sense. It is quite clear to me from the bible that you are up against this battle between good and evil all the time. We have got to get people to see that the job of the Church is to strengthen people for the battle and in the battle, and to see that there is always more than just the battle. To put it another way, we are not determined by the class conflict, but the class conflict is a real thing and so how do we live in relation to it?

How should the Church respond to the problem of mass unemployment?

There are many bodies in the Church at national, diocesan and local levels which are trying to get to grips with local problems and also with the more structural problems. But, like everyone else, the Church is very largely bewildered about how to respond to this. Living with these problems is one of the main ways in which the Church could be drawing up its agenda for the next ten years. The Church could do a good deal to help people to recover a sense of local community, self-help and so on. But the Church is clearly going to have to join in the debate about what sort of society we do want. And the Church has got to draw attention to the way in which the simplistic answers, in my view both of the Right and of the Left, are simply false and don't measure up to the situation. The Church ought to have the courage to say we are in for very disturbing times. Society has got to change greatly if it is not going to be increasingly miserable. Because we believe in God we should



not be afraid to face questions we cannot answer. We are on the verge either of a very great decline into chaos or we are moving towards a new sense of community. I think this note should be sounded.

The Church of England is, in one sense, the largest church and yet it has probably the most absent membership. It is now faced again with a resurgence of fundamentalist sects which are having considerable success. With the kind of government we have and the fairly reactionary moral rearmament behind them how do you see the problem for the Church?

Well this is where having to remain with the ambiguities of being established may still be a positive thing. There has always been a tension in christianity between the business of coming out and being a holy sect in the name of God over against the world and yet bearing witness to the fact that the whole point about God according to christians is that He is concerned with the whole world. So the pendulum swings between being a separatist sect and being concerned with the whole of society.

It is quite clear that, just as in society we are in for a continuing time of turbulence and conflict, so we are in christian circles. We are going to get this battle between the sectarians and the others. The question is whether we can get enough people to understand it positively – not to put our energies into that battle but into the things we both really care for: God and society. The same thing applies to the left-wing sects you know. They get so concerned with being righteous that they forget the political programme.

The Church in Britain has never had to respond to a strong Marxist party whereas the Roman Church, in particular, has entered into dialogue with Marxist governments, has encountered strong Marxist presence within its own membership and has engaged in revolutionary struggle in Latin America. What do you feel about the coexistence of Marxism with a Christian Church?

From my experience at the World Council of Churches I think it is a matter of pragmatic political situations. When you have extreme right wing exploitative minorities, as in Latin America, it is quite

clear that the only response, on behalf of people at large, must be to fight such a regime. Christians draw their inspiration from their established gospel and there are Christian Marxists, Marxist Christians and Marxists who draw their inspiration from elsewhere. The matter is one for pragmatics – joining together to fight blatant injustice. But, of course, once you have overthrown the regime the political conflicts are liable to return around those Marxists who seem to be more of the Stalinist type and who invest their hope in Marxism in a total way and those Marxists who are much more humanist Marxists and are therefore pragmatic after the revolution as well as before.

There is undoubtedly a fundamental clash between Christianity and Marxism. On one line of interpretation Marxism is a total explanation of everything and, of course, Christians cannot have that. Although they too have been dogmatic in their time. So there is always likely to be a clash. But many, as I do, believe in the political necessity of taking up with Marxism insofar as certain Marxist analyses on certain points are the best guidance forward. But attempt to absolutise Marxism and the battle starts again.

You have written: 'Atheists by definition have nothing to rescue them from the tyranny of their own dogmatisms.'¹ Are you here referring to all Marxists or to those you would call Stalinist?

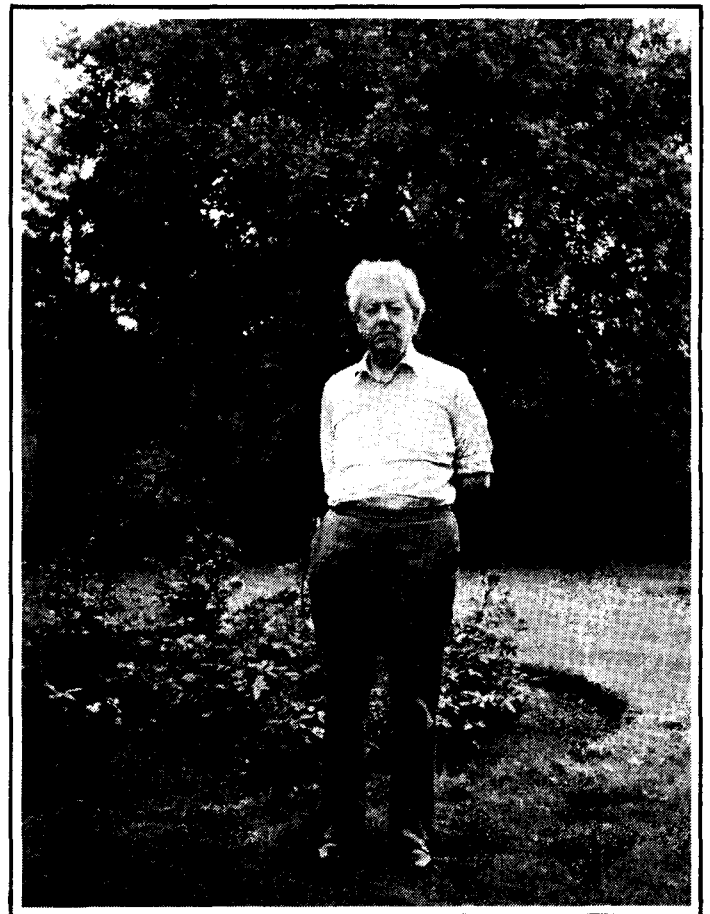
I am bound to say that some Marxists use Marxism in what I call this humanist way. There is, of course, a debate in Marxism as to whether the real Marx does not keep on reopening the question himself. This is one of the fundamental practical and theoretical questions – whether Stalinism is an inevitable product of Marxism or whether it is a distortion. It seems to me this is where Christians and Marxists can carry on a discussion since it is also clear that Christians have not practised Christianity very well. So there is a practical debate about what to do when we don't live up to our ideals or when our ideals lead us in a non-ideal direction. Power in Eastern Europe looks to have corrupted. Many hard Leftists in this country appear to want to change the rules of their organisations in a way which looks to me like the Bolshevik trouble that started it all. I suspect that this may be, as it were, the Marxist Original Sin.

You point to the probability of distortion in Marxism. You have also written that Christians can, at least, hope that God would smash their trivialities and distortions. Given the historical development of christianity can you see this as a valid claim?

Well yes, because it looks to me as though one of the features of Christian history is the capacity to keep on generating reforming self-criticism or to be reminded that there are things which they have forgotten and which they had better come back to. One cannot probabilistise this or guarantee it. One's theoretical stance, whether Christian or Marxist, is an act of faith – not a scientific thing. And what I am bothered about is finding people who are open to be judged themselves in relation both to their ideas and their aims. Although Marxism has gone wrong and, I think, there are a good many things in Marxism which look like being wrong in principle, christianity too has gone terribly wrong. So I cannot rule out on ethical or ideological grounds the collaboration of Christians and Marxists under given political circumstances for clear human aims. It has not come up as sharply in this country as elsewhere. But, although the polarisation which is developing will not come about in the form of Russia in 1917 nor in Latin America today, the issues that are raised by Marxism are going to have to be faced.

Our present government is peopled with devout Christians, certainly in the public eye. Many issues have been brought about by the policies of the Right – the Falklands, Northern Ireland, industrial dispute. How should the Church respond to a situation where, not only the Left but probably a majority of the population, are concerned about an approach which shows the Right as victims of their own dogma – and tyrannically so?

Yes I agree and I think this is one of the greatest challenges to the Church. People on both sides are becoming the victim of their own ideologies and, because of that, actually are strengthening one another in their false confrontation. The Church should draw attention to this and say that the diagnoses of both Left and Right are not good enough. This leads, of course, to more uncomfortable questions. We have to find new ways of thinking, for example, about how we take on an entirely new version of what the welfare state was trying to do in the 1940s and realising that we have not got any easy answers. So we are going to need a great deal of faith to live through what I call the 'Dark Night of our Institutions'.² I don't think we have begun to face up to the crisis we are heading for.



One section of society which does seem to have faced up to it and which has brought a fresh approach to problems of society and our political response is women. The dynamism of the women's movement has forced a male dominant society to rethink some of its approach. Apart from the basis issues of Ordination and theological tradition, where is the Church on this question of women in society?

The Church, like the rest of society, is only beginning to wrestle with this and a whole lot of people are refusing to face it. The Church is in a muddle, but it does have the positive side which is

where discerning voices in the Church should say that one of the hopeful things in our present trouble is very often this disturbing element. It does not mean that they are always right but it does mean that here is something of fundamental creative importance. In the ethnic minorities too, although being black does not make a person right any more than being white does, their pressure is making a disturbing positive element. I would have thought that the Church ought to develop a notion of God the disturber and say 'of course we shall be disturbed'. I am moved by women's liberation and by ethnic groups. But they can be positively received. They must not be idolised. There are no immediate solutions but there are new breakthrough points.

Can the Church really cope, given its structure, with the kind of disturbance which both women and ethnic minorities have the potential to create?

The answer is that we do not know. I am clear that you work for change – in my case, at my age for gradual change. But one of the ways in which important change occurs is via temporary and limited breakdown. It is not until you get breakdowns that you get breakthroughs. So we need to help one another to aim at certain things and not to draw back at a certain point and say the structure won't take it. If the structure won't take it so much the worse for the structure. I think you have to go forward. The Church is bound to be changed beyond recognition in the next 30 years and some of it will break down. But understand this, that breakdowns are often the opportunity for breakthrough. This is where developing spirituality is so important. You have got a sense of God both above you, within you and among your neighbours and friends, so that whatever happens to the structure you have something positive to live by.

Your whole operation rests on faith and your conduct relates to a sense of obedience to God as you understand it. Yet, to pick up another depressing issue of the present – young people who have no hope and no future to look to – these people do not understand what it is to have a faith in God, never mind guidance of the Holy Spirit. How are you going to talk to them?

I think that is the greatest challenge there is. I hope to be part of the Church getting to grips with the sort of things we have been talking about and finding some worthwhile things to do together with people who live in these depressing situations. Until you find worthwhile things to do you cannot entertain the notion of hope, or love, or neighbourliness and so there is no point in going on to talk about God in that situation. In the end it will be a question of stimulating groups of people to live in these situations in such a way as to rekindle community around something to do and something to fight for. The fighting element is going to be there – that is why we are going to go on having a conflict. One of the great challenges is for people who are not so underprivileged to respond to this conflict in a way which will be positive and not to treat it as just a symptom to be dealt with.

In the recent controversy the ranks of the senior clergy did seem to close around you and your support was tremendous. Do you feel that there is a definite willingness there to tackle some of these difficult issues?

Among many of what you call the senior clergy there is the courage if only they could be shown a way of tackling these issues which ties up with what they understand about the christian faith and the pastoral necessities of the people they are supposed to be

looking after. If I am suitably humble and work with sympathetic people there may be a considerable number of people around who will be happy to develop a lead if they are helped. But we are faced with questions which in some senses people have never been faced with before.

But these are not new questions. Do you mean that the Church is not in touch with the realities of the class problem?

That has something to do with it but it is not the main reason. I think from somewhere in perhaps the eighteenth century the notion of Christianity being concerned with the whole of life lost its political grasp. People have concentrated more and more on appropriate individual spirituality, appropriate reforms in worship, problems of understanding the bible in an intellectual way but have forgotten what in one sense was the positive side of Christendom – to think about the whole world and to be concerned about it. So the whole business of what you might call learning and developing practical Christian social ethics has been a very low priority.

You are obviously prepared to go out and do your job, which will bring you into the firing line.

Oh, clearly yes. Because of what we have said earlier. There is this vocal reaction which is, in a sense, right wing but is not a right wing in a narrow political sense but rather more a reaction against christian activism on a broad front. There are plenty of reasons for being critical at certain levels about, for example, the World Council of Churches' activities and about some of our more simplistic political writings. So it is going to be difficult to cope with this. I think the controversy on the doctrinal side has shown just how nervy some people are.

Coming into such an important role in the Church now, do you regard yourself still as primarily an intellectual or as an activist in some ways?

I have always tried to relate my thinking to some kind of practice. I certainly do not think you can be a good thinker if you are not involved in activity, getting feedback from where people are working things out. I do hope to exploit things like membership of the House of Lords – to be, at least, shall I say, actively disturbing.

Is using your seat in the House of Lords the best way of making an impact as a disturber?

Well the Church will find other ways. I was just thinking as one of the small number of people who have that particular platform that I should make use of it. I would not actually fight to preserve that, but as long as you have opportunities you should use them.

The Church has got to be more involved locally and regionally and I think that it is one of my possible teaching roles, which would be related to activism, to try and make it clear to people how, for reasons of faith and theology, you have to go in for these sorts of things. I ought to be able to wrestle with this and set other people freer to get more involved.

What it will all bring about in practice I could not say. I suspect that I may end up as an elderly bourgeois intellectual without bringing much off. But . . . yes . . . I want to try! □

¹ 'Putting Theology to Work' in *Theology* March 1978.

² The title of a forthcoming book by David Jenkins.

The deal is on the verge of being finalised. No consultation — with either the people of Hongkong or Britain. And it won't work

The Hongkong Syndrome

Walter Easey



ONE HUNDRED AND forty five years ago, Britain got into the Hongkong business as the almost accidental by-product of the First Opium War (1839-1842). Britain is presently negotiating its way out of being a landlord on Chinese soil since the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) has somewhat belatedly noticed a flaw in the original lease (*viz*, that it had been dictated at gunpoint by the gun-wielder — Britain). It was not, and never had been, a valid contract in international or any other kind of law and being a patriotic sort of bunch, they want it back. Thatcher's crew in the Foreign Office are busy facilitating their demand. The wretched Geoffrey Howe shuttles to and fro and although a few details over the position of Cathay Pacific Airways and port regulations still need sorting out, there is very little doubt that in a few weeks, Britain and the PRC will sign a document that cedes British sovereignty back to China and lays down a timetable and programme for eventual full reincorporation of the world's biggest sweatshop into its own rightful mother-country.

The British press has largely ignored the issue (the main exception is the *Guardian*);

parliament gave a few hours over to a puerile debate that constantly retreated behind bland and meaningless reassurances from ministers and a constant re-statement that the contents of the talks in Peking must remain confidential; people in Hongkong have not kicked up much fuss — there hasn't been a single riot for over 18 months — so there is clearly no reason to worry, is there? Well, I think the whole question of what happens in Hongkong from now through to 1997 and beyond is altogether more problematic than has been presented to us. There are some very serious problems, some of which appear to be intractable and the implications of those problems will have effects locally, in China, in Britain and to an extent everywhere in the world.

Problems with the package

The essence of the deal that has emerged, to judge by statements from *Xinhua* (New China News Agency) and leaks to the press is as follows: Britain will cede its claim to sovereignty over all Hongkong in 1997 — the date of the expiry of the 99-year lease on the New Territories. Between now and 1997, limited democratic reforms will be introduced with the aim of directly electing a part of the Legislative Council. A Liaison Group will be set up, sited initially in Guangzhou (Canton) but later sitting in Hongkong to perform liaison and consultation roles but not in any administrative sense. China has agreed to a form of words that 'guarantees' Hongkong's unique economic system and way of life, its familiar legal system, the ownership of property and transfer of goods, quotas, tariffs and negotiating rights with GATT and other bodies, its own customs status, the convertability of the Hongkong dollar, freedom of movement and educational system. A Green Paper on electoral reform has been published and the whole package will be published in detail to enable widespread consultation and comment before

the deal is initialled and then debated in parliament this autumn. Outstanding issues not yet agreed are said to be nationality and passports, civil aviation rights and the legal status of land in the New Territories.

The Chinese have agreed that no fundamental change to the package will take place for 50 years. They, interestingly, asserted their right to station armed forces in the territory as they see fit and when this was announced, the Stock Market slumped by 50 points in a day. From the Chinese side, provision for the status on offer was made at the 11th National Congress under Article 31 of the Chinese Constitution for the establishment of Special Administrative Zones and this form of association has also been offered to Taiwan.

The problem with the package is that it assumes a large number of other conditions that either will not occur or may very well change and is in any case, *much too late*. Specifically, it assumes that the six million people of Hongkong will accept the package, that the Hongkong economy will continue to thrive and provide full employment, that the PRC are both sincere about their stated wish to see a capitalist enclave on its soil persist and prosper, that there will be a continuation of this policy when the present set of geriatric leaders step aside or die, and that investment by both indigenous and foreign capitalists will continue at the same sort of levels as in the past.

Free market capitalism

Let us start with the stuff that really makes the world go round, which is not love, but *money*. This stuff is flowing out of Hongkong in a big way. Because of the way that the colony's financial arrangements are organised — or, more correctly, unorganised — it is impossible to quantify total outflows. There is no check on capital movement other than what can be inferred indirectly from changes in the exchange-rate of the Hongkong dollar against the US and even this index has been shielded by linking the two currencies together during

the last year with the Hongkong government probably expending very large amounts of its cash reserves holding the figure to HK/US\$7.83 ratio. On a free market, the ratio would be much lower. What we do know is that, say, in the period 1979/81, HK\$13.8 billion left Hongkong for the USA alone. The flow in the other direction was less than a fifth of that amount. (*New York Times* 1 Aug 1982).

Jardine Matheson — the colony's largest trading conglomerate (and one of the world's larger such corporations) pulled out and relocated its headquarters in Bermuda. One of Hongkong's largest securities companies, Sun Hung Kai, concluded a deal with Merrill Lynch (the world's No 1 stockbrokers) whereby its chairman Fung King-hey has a convertible debenture deal that will allow him to export HK\$330 million to the USA overnight whenever he wants to. In fact, the Chinatowns of the West, particularly New York, Toronto, London and Amsterdam are seething with hot Hongkong slush-funds and property prices have risen steeply. There is also considerable investment of Hongkong money outside of the traditional Chinatowns and only recently I discovered through the London *Holborn Gazette* that a local estate brokers has set up a Hongkong office specifically to channel money into the UK for Hongkongers who wish to purchase homes in London. Another estate broker is busy leafletting houses in the London borough of Camden advertising its services and boasting of a long list of potential buyers from Hongkong.

The point of this is that Hongkong's economy has always depended on quick and easy access to investment funds for speculative schemes and much of this has come from local investors. The peculiarity of Hongkong's capitalism has been its dependence on the confidence and availability of locally-generated money and the available evidence is that this has seeped away in substantial amounts and is likely to continue to do so. Local real estate prices remain in a deep slump as sellers forlornly seek reluctant buyers, often taking losses of high levels compared with the prices they paid only a few years ago.

A confidential Merrill Lynch survey of Hongkong's securities written by their Senior Equity Specialist Samuel D Isaly in May 1982, classified *all* Hongkong shares as 'speculative' or 'high risk' and on the settlement they saw as forthcoming between China and Britain over the future observed that: 'We expect that that the 'solution' to Hongkong's status will be a

legal charade, *but we are unable to clearly conceive of its nature.*' (my emphasis WVE)

Well, nor can I. Hongkong's economy has prospered under a virtually unrestricted capitalism of the sort that is extinct in Europe and North America. No restriction on monopolies (they are encouraged and much massaged by the colonial government) nor serious attempt to regulate the stock market by way of prohibiting insider-trading or demonstrably menda-

full reincorporation of the world's biggest sweatshop into its own rightful mother-country

cious share prospectuses, minimal trade union activity, no social security and above all no political activity other than the discreet hand of the Foreign Office in bed with local millionaire activists that have over decades secured a squalid compact whereby Whitehall exerts minimum pressure on the actual details of local activities in return for privileged entry for British goods and a swingeing return in the City for British insurance, shipping and banking interests. This has been very profitable for London — the return on investments has been at least equivalent to that on British investments in South Africa — perhaps in the region of £2,000 million a year in recent years.

A little bit of democracy . . .

But you cannot mess about with the whole unstable house of cards without bringing it to the ground rather quickly. Take democratic reform as a case in point. For a long time, the only word that issued from Whitehall or Government House in Hong-

kong on democracy was that there was no local demand for it — people were happy with a sound and fair colonial administration that guaranteed freedom for enterprising workers and industrialists, the maximum opportunity to create their own, and thus, others' wealth. A Thatcherite paradise of optimising creativity, hard work and a sharp eye for the main chance with no excessive restrictions imposed by pointy-headed professors under the influence of the International Labour Organisation or groups (God forbid) even further to the left.

However, the stark realities of any conceivable democratic reform in Hongkong is that without ballot-rigging or internment, the candidates who will win in any fair elections will be the sort of people who have emerged from the last 15 years of student politics, grass roots organisation amongst the poor and oppressed and those who have emerged from the painful process of de-Maoification and the reappraisal of the Cultural Revolution. They will stand on low-key socialist platforms that stress their Chinese patriotism whilst strongly arguing for *social justice*. This social justice is pretty short in Hongkong today and the sort of concerns about housing, the needs of the elderly, medical care and conditions at the workplace will inevitably inform the demands that they put forward. Those demands can only be met by raising taxes to the affluent and improving both wages, health and safety standards in the factories. This, ultimately, can only be financed from the *rate of profit* (since Britain will not provide any subsidies from this end). It is precisely the high rate of profit that has attracted overseas investment and its fall is precisely what will divert those same very volatile funds into less problematic regions like



South Korea, the Philippines or Taiwan and teams from those countries have already been in Hongkong touting for business.

But the demand for democratic reform is irresistible now and is being guardedly encouraged by the Hongkong government in the hope that a locally-based political machine which they hope (unrealistically, in my view) to inflate as a buffer against steady Chinese encroachment on their freedom to extract every last ounce of the distillate of workers' sweat will work. It will not. The contradiction between the demands of a virtually unrestricted capitalism and social-democratic politics that is firmly based is very difficult to reconcile. The understaffing and corruption of the Factory Inspectorate, the 19th century Company Laws listlessly enforced, the arrogance and indifference of officialdom in every sphere of government is not a simple adjacent accident of the way capitalism in Hongkong works. It is *structural*.

The Chinese dimension

And these will be the areas that the newly elected Legislative Councillors will be called to exert themselves in. To try and fail will discredit the whole scheme. Not to try will discredit themselves. Either failure will probably end in riots with the distinct possibility that they will only be put down by the deployment, not of the crooked and brutal Hongkong police backed up by Ghurka mercenaries, but by the *Peoples Liberation Army*. In this scenario the interim arrangements and the post-1997 position as presently contemplated will simply cease to exist. China will have no choice but to assert its full control.

Internal to China, a number of problems arise that are not capable of simple solution. If by a miracle, they can ensure the transition smoothly and Hongkong goes on making lots of money for them, the gap between the incomes of Guangdong Province (the adjacent province to Hongkong) and the rest of China will widen and the Peking leadership will be faced with the age-old problem of regional demands² for greater autonomy against the centralising forces of the army and the politbureau. If it does not succeed in maintaining Hongkong as a profitable enterprise, then they will have the problem of feeding a giant metropolis which has no natural resources and nothing to pay for its food.

Internationally, China is going to have a real problem in convincing the world that its resumption of Hongkong is deeply desired by, and in the interests of, the people of Hongkong. This will be no easy

task because every opinion poll indicates the opposite and this coheres with most of the articles on the subject in the serious Hongkong Chinese press such as *Pai Shing* (The Common People) or *Qishi Niandai* (The Seventies Magazine) as well as conversations and correspondence with friends in the colony. The majority position appears to be that they would be heartily grateful to see the back of the British and let alone to run their affairs but *not* at the price of deliverance to the whims of an administration that will be more responsive to the dictates of the party headquarters in Peking than to the needs of the people of Hongkong. However, the Peking party apparatus is in full swing trying to win the mass of Hongkong opinion over to its point of view and they have a well-organised apparatus to work with. The combination of a pliant pro-Peking trade union sector plus cultural outlets in newspapers, cinemas and schools and a partial base in the students' unions at the main universities gives them numerous opportunities to put their ideas across.

a grievous human tragedy is building up for Hongkong in the next few years

Many will agree and even more acquiesce since opposition to the programme expressed too openly *now* may well be held against you later on.

In Britain, the likeliest outcome of Chinese resumption of Hongkong is that the Chinese community here which is the third biggest ethnic minority in Britain, will emerge from hiding and start to take some part in the political process. They have signally failed to do so so far. Overseas Chinese (*Huagiao*) have understandably refrained from involvement given their experiences in pogroms in California in the 1890s, race riots directed at them in Malaya in the 1960s and outright genocide in the aftermath of the Suharto coup in Indonesia. But this will change and as the possibility of considering their sojourn in the UK as a temporary one finishing in return to retirement in Hongkong or China recedes, then it will be pretty clear fairly soon that if their particular needs as a community are to be met, they will have to join political parties, stand for elections and place their demands on race relations boards, local authorities, police bodies, central government, in short assert themselves as a community right across the board.

Globally, the most important effect will

be felt in Taiwan. If China can pull off a peaceful transition in Hongkong and keep its 'patriotic bourgeoisie' both in place and in considerable affluence, the bourgeoisie that currently supports the Taiwan regime of Chiang Ching-kwo will start to eye the mainland with considerable interest. It is, after all, a huge untapped market potentially open to large sales of the sort of thing that Taiwan produces in great quantities, rice-cookers, transistorised sound systems and even shipping. Being a Special Administrative Zone would put them on the inside track for a market of 1,000 million people who are being urged to get rich by Deng Xiaoping and his adherents.

Whatever happened to the 'Falklands factor'?

Britain's manufacturing elite are rubbing their hands at the prospects of selling aircraft, computers, mining machinery and military hardware to the PRC once all the difficulties posed by Hongkong are removed from the agenda. They have latched on this one fact to explain why their sales of products to the PRC are so poor compared to the French or West Germans. The City can relocate its funds and corps of coupon-clippers in other profit-centres if need be and as far as the politicians are concerned, they have locked the door firmly against our 2½ million fellow British subjects and passport-holders through the British Nationalities Act 1982.

There is a delicate irony in Britain rearranging its old colonial empire to suit its present crisis. We reinforce the Falklands with untold billions (going to Thatcher's allies in the military and construction fields) on the grounds that sovereignty is un-negotiable and the will of the Falklanders is sacrosanct. At the same time, another branch of the Foreign Office is busy negotiating freely a sovereignty for a people that is twice the size of Israel, who have not been consulted, whose wishes will certainly not be sacrosanct and will initial a deal with China *before* either the details have been presented to the people it concerns or to the body that is nominally responsible for the decision – the British parliament.

There is, in my view, a grievous human tragedy building up for Hongkong in the next few years. We may yet see a new generation of boat-people in the South China Sea, except this lot will be waving perfectly useless British passports at the cameras! And we should reflect in shame over the fact that we had the opportunity to notice the forthcoming drama if only we

had taken notice of the censored parts of the Third Report of the Parliamentary Defence and External Affairs Sub-Committee nine years ago (House of Commons Papers 270 1976). The then head of the Hongkong desk at the Foreign Office was being questioned about the future of Hongkong. In the prologue of the Minutes of Evidence to the Sub-Committee it states that 'asterisks indicate that part or all of a question or answer thereto or several consecutive questions and the answers thereto have not been reported'.

(O'Keefe) 'I think that these decisions are

taken because there is faith in the future of Hongkong and the only policy we can now adopt is one of regarding the future of Hongkong as a viable entity. More than that one cannot say. ***. The decisions are taken in the interests of the people of Hongkong. ***. There is no other viable policy.' (p18)

One day, perhaps, there will be parliamentary select committees who do not let this sort of deception pass unchallenged nor acquiesce in the suppression of information that at the very least both the people of Hongkong and those of the nation that has cruelly and cleverly exploited it for 145 years should know so that they could assess

their position and make their calculations. The secrecy of government, the greed of City merchants and the spinelessness of politicians confronted with the professionals of the Foreign Office lie-machine has ensured that a deal which will probably not work has been foisted off on a people who have not been consulted and has been unscrutinised by the parliament that is supposed to make sure that this sort of cynical stitch-up doesn't happen.

Some of us tried to draw attention to this a few years ago. No-one listened. I expect the same will happen today. □

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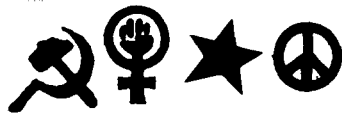
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Pat Phoenix left *Coronation Street* last year after appearing as Elsie Tanner from the very first episode of the series. Tony Booth is best known as Alf Garnett's son-in-law in *Till Death Us Do Part*. Both are now appearing in *The Man*, a stage thriller. Richard Dyer and Rosalind Brunt went to interview them backstage at the Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne.

What you think is the most important thing you've done in your careers?

Pat Phoenix Well, we haven't done it yet!

Does that mean you have something in mind?

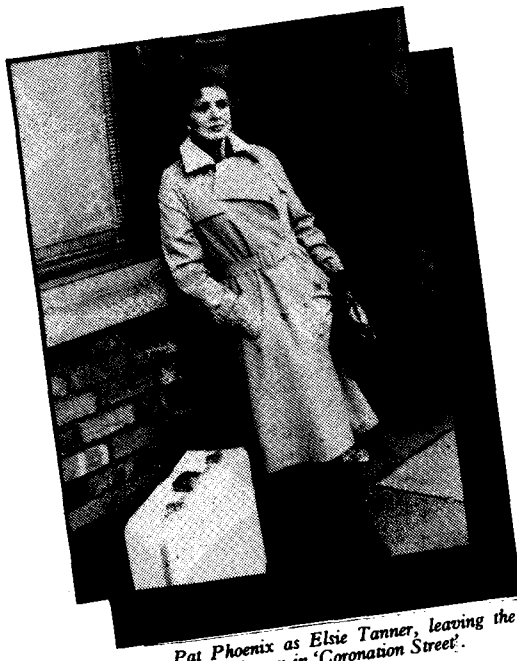
Pat There are lots of things you would like to do. There are things you would like to do and things you *have* to do, but you don't know what will come up till it does.

Is it likely to be in the theatre . . . ?

Pat I should think it would be with me.

Tony Booth As an actor, from a selfish point of view, theatre is best because that's where the actor is still in control. There's no director manipulating you. We make our own performance, we set our own pace – it's that immediate thing that happens from 8.15 until 10 . . . that moment, that's great. That's purely from an actor's selfish point of view.

So is theatre the most important thing to do both socially and personally?



Pat Phoenix as Elsie Tanner, leaving the Premiers Return in 'Coronation Street'.

Tony No, you have to be working in television and the mass media, that's where the people are.

How much do you worry about what parts you're playing, what kinds of play you're in?

Pat I reckon in my long career I have done just about every kind of play. Those with a political message. Those with no message at all. Just plain bloody awful. I have done marvellous plays. I've done it all one way or another. And so I have now reached the stage where if I can make them laugh, or make them cry, or make them go out feeling better or just entertained, that's my job. That's my purpose. I haven't any other purpose. That's it.

But would you draw a line about playing a particular part or a particular play, on political grounds?

Pat No. If it was an entertaining part and a good play I'd play it. They say that because of what they believe you wouldn't play, say, a Tory MP with sympathy – but of course I would. If I was a man and they asked me to play Hitler, I'd do it.

Tony But not if it was a play that advocated fascism, where the message was a song of praise to fascism.

Pat Oh, no.

Tony So you would draw the line somewhere!

You're both well known for playing working class parts. Are you conscious of that?

Pat All actors should be working class. That's where we came from in the beginning. We were all rogues and vagabonds, we used to play fools in churches and village greens . . .

But you are stars. You do public appearances as stars rather than as working class people, don't you?

Pat I don't know what you mean. I am a working actress. I work bloody hard. I really don't know what you mean by a star. I am in public demand at the moment and it's a case of demand and supply. There will come a time when I'm not in demand and I won't be doing these things. I'm a leading lady because I've worked myself to the top of my profession.



All Should Be

Interview with Pat

When people come to see you in a play do you think they are expecting a working class character?

Pat Oh no. Since I've been in the Street I've gone out many times and I've played a myriad of characters.

Tony An actor is a person who should be able to play almost any part. You have to find out what the limit of your range is. You are the one who is conscious of it, not me. You're bringing up class. I'm for the abolition of class.

Which brings us to politics.

Pat Watch it!

Would you put a label to either of your politics?

Tony I wouldn't because I won't accept any dogma that tells you to do such and such. Not Christianity, not socialism. Anyway, Marx wasn't saying 'Don't do this, don't do that' – he was about freedom and human expression.



ors king Class

ix and Tony Booth

Pat No, I can't either. I am involved with people, I care about people and I care what happens to the world, but I wouldn't say I was anything in particular.

And yet you both went to Chesterfield to support Tony Benn recently?

Tony Oh yes, within the structure of society as it stands, our sympathy lies with Labour, of course.

Were you at Chesterfield mainly as Labour supporters or were you specifically supporting Benn?

Pat Because he's a man you can respect, who speaks the truth – he's a good man, and he'll follow through.

Tony And his form of socialism is something you can believe in.

Pat I would not have gone out on that bitter cold day if I had not believed in the man, it's as simple as that. I believe in what he's trying to do and I want better things for this country and, at the moment, the

only party that I can see is going to do that is the Labour Party. There are certain people in the Labour Party who you can believe in.

Does it worry you what the public will think of such support?

Tony It's interesting that no one ever asks Tory actors whether it offends their public. Only people like us get asked – only people on the Left. Nobody ever addressed that question to Kenny Everett.

Pat You should have seen my hate letters especially when I didn't stand up for the 'Land of Hope and Glory' on one occasion. But you can't let that bother you. Why should we? As you say we are noted for our working class performances. What else would Elsie Tanner be? A Tory supporter?

What about the politics in Equity? Does that involve you at all?

Tony Equity is too weak, it's more like an actors' club. If Equity combined with the unions within what could loosely be called entertainment, and had a combined voice, then it might have some effect. We might be able to get a deal for actors and people in the theatre and so on if we were combined with technicians in television. If we had a strike and they pulled out the plugs, that would really have some effect – no theatre, no radio, and no TV . . .

And the Workers' Revolutionary Party, since they are quite famous within Equity. Do you

think they have contributed to the problems you're taking about?

Pat Well, yes, the name makes you think of the main problem. If you are going to be a workers' party, first understand the workers and know that half of them are not workers because they haven't got a job.

Tony I feel sorry for them, they're just so out of touch.

Another area of politics I'd like to ask you about, Pat, is feminism. Would you call yourself a feminist?

Pat No I don't. Actresses have always earned their own money, probably more than men. We have had to do the same jobs as men. We have had to stand up in the cold, get up just as early, face the elements, do stunts if necessary.

But when you were not so well known, desperate for work, were you ever required to do things that were compromising to you as a woman, like stripping?

Pat I was told to strip twice before I was well known and I sent for my agent and screamed and carried on and said 'No, I won't, why should I?' I didn't think it was necessary to the part I was playing. I threatened everything and I got away with it. Most actors and actresses are liberated today.

So you did have to stand up against the way you were being treated. Can we ask you now about writing, because you both write? Had you got anything in mind when you decided to write your autobiography?



Tony Booth—seen here with Una Stubbs—as Mike and Rita in 'Till Death Us Do Part'.

Pat Well, there was the demand. The first book had sold well and I enjoyed doing it. And then the second one, I didn't enjoy it too much, but I wrote it simply because of a lot of the rubbish that was being written in the press about what actually did happen with Alan and myself. It was hard to write and I didn't enjoy it nearly as much. I was always told that it wouldn't sell because it didn't knock people and it was prose. But now it's in the top twenty, so there you are! I wrote it to put the record straight.

There was a change in the character of Elsie in Coronation Street over the years. You became much more glamorous and also much nicer late on in the series. Did you put that in or was it already scripted?

Pat Let me tell you that I much preferred the earlier form because I always thought that Elsie had a great big heart, not much brains. She wasn't a 'good' person. She mellowed I think. But later on, I didn't believe in the character any more. I think they castrated her. You know a 'good' character is not the best in the world to act – the naughty ones are much better to play. People who make terrible mistakes – those are the best characters to play.

Tony you are less fixed in the public mind with a particular character – do you regret that or has it helped you?

Tony No, but on the other hand being in *Till Death Us Do Part* meant that I was well enough known not to get offered a whole range of parts. Successful TV series usually have this effect on the actors afterwards.

So from a work point of view it's best either to be in one-offs or else to be in a long running serial like the Street?

Tony Right. But I am glad I wasn't stuck with one part for 20 years. That would be too much like the worst of work in our society. There's two kinds of work, vocational and vacational. Vocational is where you are doing something you really believe in and care about. Vacational is where all you are thinking about all the time you're working is your vacation, your holidays. And what's the point of that for a whole lifetime?

It must be quite difficult to have anything of a private life for you both.

Pat We haven't got one at all. Any actor who goes into the business must be prepared to give a certain amount of their life to public selling. With us it's gone way over the top but you must accept it and I've accepted it. You know people will write about you, much of it's not true and that's not very nice. And stories are angled – I

remember one tabloid newspaper carrying a so-called interview with me on its middle page entitled 'Why I'll need sex at 60'. Entirely fictitious. You have no control over this kind of reporting. The only time we get any kind of a private life is when the door is locked.

SUPERGIRL

Tessa Perkins

That the mass media has found it necessary and profitable to take account of feminism has been evident for several years now. Although this can be seen in a wide variety of films and in all sorts of different ways one of the most obvious ways of doing this is by using a role-reversal format – putting women, or less often men, in roles or environments traditionally or conventionally associated with the opposite sex. *Wonder Woman*, *Juliet Bravo*, *Cagney & Lacey*, *Tenko*, *Kramer vs Kramer*, *Tootsie*, *Victor Victoria* are all examples of this form.

There is of course nothing particularly new about the role-reversal form – the career woman movies of the 30s are another instance. But it is a form which particularly lends itself to the exploration and expression of ideas about gender identity and it is no coincidence that the gender identity which is being explicitly investigated is virtually always the woman's.

In giving women (or men) roles normally associated with the opposite sex it might seem that the media are responding to feminists'/women's criticisms of their products – and of course in a sense they are – film producers can not afford to ignore any social movement which has significance for their audiences. But the question is what function do these products perform? Does putting a woman in a man's role challenge the status quo – by suggesting an acceptance of the change and providing new models for us and our children; or do they somehow manage to reinforce the status quo by robbing feminism of its guts.

It is important to recognise that even though all the examples listed above are

made for a mass market, there are definite differences between these products and they use the role-reversal format in very different ways. Programmes such as *Cagney & Lacey* and *Tenko* (especially the first series) are considerably more radical (challenging, provocative, disturbing) than *Wonder Woman*, *Juliet Bravo* or – *Supergirl*.

Supergirl is a good example of a film which while appearing to accept a change in the status quo (by having a woman in the role of a traditionally male hero) in fact reinforces the status quo and reassures its audience that any apparent challenge to the status quo is probably illusory and anyway containable. Any disturbance to the social order which a female super hero might potentially pose is almost completely neutralised. I say *almost* because although as far as the film's narrative is concerned the suppression of feminism is total, the film nonetheless offers women a pleasure which comes close to being subversive.

In order to see how the narrative neutralises the potential threat it is useful to compare *Supergirl* with *Superman* – always remembering that however naturally one event or aspect of the story seems to follow from another, stories are *constructions* and the choices (conscious or otherwise) that are made in the telling of the story and how it is told are significant.

Although there are similarities between the two *Supers* these are relatively unimportant – the source of an occasional joke and a useful reference point for the audience. Perhaps the most important similarity is that both *Superman* and *Supergirl* are characterised as being somewhat wimpish in their earthly roles (as Clark Kent and Linda Lee). But the 'innocence' or naivety which is part of this is far more explicit and central to the Linda Lee character. Within the films' realities this is 'explained' by the initial personality given to *Supergirl* and by what is different between the two film's narratives. *Superman* has grown up as an earthling and therefore

knows how to behave on earth (despite minor problems about concealing his identity and superpowers); he is destined to remain on earth and has a mission to use his powers to help (American) humanity. Supergirl is only a temporary visitor to earth. She will return to her planet once she has regained the omegatron. It is significant also that Superman is on earth through no fault of his own but rather as

sières. The first humans she sees happen to be adolescent girls playing baseball – and so she transforms herself and masquerades as a new pupil – Linda Lee . . . a *girl*, mark you, not an adult woman. And as a girl she experiences her first kiss and back in her room we watch her moon in front of the mirror narcissistically gazing at herself and caressing her lips – a reassuringly stereotypical view of adolescent female sexuality.

nasty, Nigel, when the omegatron lands in the pâté. Abandoning Nigel, whom she no longer needs, Selina seizes the omegatron which will give her the power she needs to perfect her magic and dominate the world – except that Supergirl keeps spoiling her fun. But what really infuriates Selina is that Ethan, the young woodcutter to whom Selina has given a potion so that he will fall in love with her, goes and falls in love with 'the wimp'/Linda Lee (ie, Supergirl).

Three brief points: firstly, innocent adolescent female sexuality is counterposed to the rampant, castrating, sexuality of a mature woman – as a mature woman of course Selina can only get a man by trickery; secondly, note that when a



the consequence of the failure of the council of Krypton to take the advice of Superman's father. By contrast Supergirl's visit to earth is necessitated by her own carelessness and romanticism (and by the irresponsibility of the disillusioned but idealistic Zoltar). Note also that what caused the destruction of Krypton was a failure in scientific knowledge compared to the idle game (Zoltar and Kara/Supergirl were *playing* with the omegatron) and nostalgia which threatened to destroy Supergirl's planet and caused her visit.

From this initial difference other differences follow 'naturally' within the film's reality – although other choices could have been made. When Supergirl arrives on earth she is full of wonderment at what she finds from daisies to bunnies, to bras-

By making Supergirl an adolescent girl who is sexually naive, much of the threat of a strong woman is taken away – it is worth noting that tomboy characters are conventionally shown as being sexually naive.

Another major difference between the *Supergirl* and *Superman* films is in the opponent and the nature of the opposition. Supergirl's opponent is Selina (played wonderfully by Faye Dunaway). Selina is to all intents and purposes a witch with a considerable command of black magic and a desire to dominate the world. Selina happens to be picnicking with another

woman wants to dominate the world (a) she gets distracted by *personal* issues of vanity and jealousy and (b) uses witchcraft rather than science. Superman's opponents are men with computers and bombs. Thirdly, much of the threat to the patriarchal status quo of having a female superhero is neutralised if her opponent is a woman also.

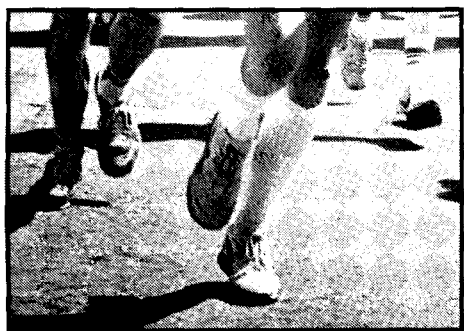
In many respects Selina poses more of a threat to the patriarchal order than Supergirl who after all only wants to fetch her 'toy' and go home and make amends – while Selina uses men for her convenience

– manipulates and dismisses them as it suits her. And so it is ultimately reassuring that it is a woman (Supergirl) who finally destroys Selina – and having destroyed her leaves earth to return home with the power source which caused all the disturbance. It is of course additionally significant that Supergirl leaves earth (as she arrived) through the water, ie her planet appears to be in the bowels of the earth (suggesting a female turning inward) rather than in outer space with its expansive and limitless connotations. The status quo is re-established and the audience can go home with the reassuring knowledge that any

disturbance caused by feminism (represented here by two powerful women) is purely temporary.

Many more examples could be given to show how *Supergirl* functions to reproduce the status quo and to neutralise any potential threat posed by role-reversals. But although the narrative suppresses feminism the film nonetheless does offer women some mildly subversive pleasures. There is, for example, considerable pleasure in seeing a truly wicked and competent woman using men in the way men so often treat women; and Faye Dunaway seems to relish the role of Selina. There is a pleasure

in Supergirl's strength (especially with the rapists) and grace and her evident pleasure in flying and jumping; there is also considerable, though contradictory pleasure, in seeing so many male wimps – all the men in the film are more or less ineffectual, while the four women are all significantly more forceful and effectual. But there is a sting in the tail of this last pleasure because, while it may appeal to women and fit in with a female sub-cultural view of men, we must also recognise that it reproduces an important theme in patriarchal ideology – namely that strong women render men powerless.



As our memories of the sun-struck and star-spangled Olympics recede into the distance, the annual clamour for places in the London Marathon begins. Computer selection supposedly now guarantees a scientifically-based cross-section of entrants chosen on the grounds of sex, age, occupation, geography and experience. The enduring popularity of the event is perhaps best illustrated by the abuse heaped on the organisers by those unfortunate enough not to be chosen to join that happy throng of 20,000 plus. The next six months for the chosen masses will be a time of ever-lengthening runs in an effort to be fit enough to make the finish on Westminster Bridge and enjoy that special moment of achievement.

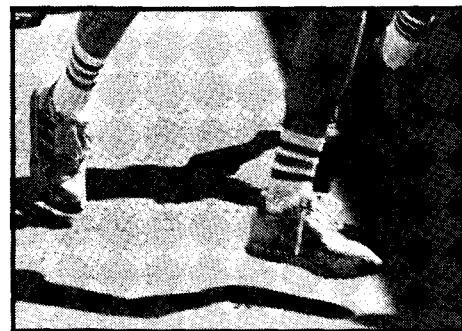
It seems so long ago now, but it was just five years back that this UK running boom really began with the 1978 *Sunday Times* National Fun Run. Following a summer season of articles full of the virtues of physical fitness for the middle-aged middle classes, an amazing 12,000 runners turned up. The 'fun-runner' was born. This event was a catalyst for the popularity of running, providing an opportunity for people to take part in a running event without feeling that they would be shown up or ridiculed.

THE RUNNING BOOM

Mark Perryman

In 1984, the boom is still with us and showing signs of a growing maturity. The London Marathon has entered the public's sporting consciousness, and in four short years has come to rival the Cup Final and the Derby as a truly 'national' event. Practically every town has a fun run of some description; informal jogging clubs are springing up everywhere. Books, films and even plays, are being produced which revolve around running. Sport is fashionable and the trendiest man/woman-about-town is resplendent in the brand names of the sporting fraternity – Nike, Adidas, Le Coq Sportif and so on . . .

So, what has caused the boom? The coverage of fun-running and the marathon by those two highlights of the Sunday breakfast table, the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times*, has certainly helped. So has the never-ending fascination of the tabloids with anything and everything connected with Daley Thompson, Seb Coe, Steve Cram and of course the *Daily Mail's* authorised heroine and incomparable publicist (knowing or otherwise) Zola Budd. The often crass and invariably ill-informed sports coverage of the popular press has nevertheless spurred on the enthusiasm of the nation's runners. The *Daily Mirror* has made a constructive input by sponsoring and publicising 'Mirrorthon' runners for charity. *Women's Own* has joined the sports firm Nike in sponsoring a women's only training and racing



programme over the increasingly popular 10 km distance. A new range of glossy monthlies have appeared specialising in Jogging/Keep Fit. The latest and most self-consciously identified with the boom in keep-fit is *Fitness*, with its imaginative mix of fashion and sport being aimed primarily at young(ish) women. The more specialised *Running* now has a steadily rising monthly sale of 42,000 and is available at newsagents across the country.

The London Marathon, which, aided by TV coverage, dwarfs in time and scale any other event, is the key to the boom and has offered a chance to thousands to run through the streets of the capital in front of cheering crowds, who line the way as if Prince Charles, Princess Di and Prince William were jogging by. It is a combination of living out a fantasy, achievement and harmless (for once) machismo.

The key to the marathon's appeal is that not everyone who wants to run is jet-propelled. Thus that age-old Olympic virtue comes to life – the point is the taking part not the winning. In a marathon, everyone wins, merely by starting. The London Marathon, with an entry of 20,000 plus, has provided the impetus for more than 140 other marathons, ranging from the entry of 30 in the Isles of Scilly race to

the big five of Glasgow, Manchester, Nottingham, Mersey and Bolton.

But the marathon alone would have been unable to sustain this level of sporting activity. After all, it does take a lot of time and effort to train to run 26 miles. Emerging in the last year or so, has been a massive increase in the number of half-marathons, 10-mile road races, and, most popular of all, 10 kilometre races. These can be run far more regularly than a marathon, providing a sense of competitive continuity requiring less training and less effort on the part of both runners and organisers. Instead of the boom dying out, whole new groups of enthusiasts are being created, who might never have considered running whilst the emphasis was so heavily on the daunting traditional marathon.

Over the last six years, running has become a much more socially-acceptable activity; it's no longer just the odd nutter plodding around the park. The appeal lies in the simplicity of the exercise with the minimum of requirements as regards facilities and kit. The running fixation of that infamous dole-queue hustler, *Brookside's* Mattie, is, as is always the case with soap operas, based on fact. Running is by no means a middle-class preserve. The media's approval is significant. The early 80s were full of TV programmes linking health and fitness - 'Looking Good, Feeling Fit', 'Medical Express' - and Jimmy Saville has been in the forefront of convincing older people that being a veteran runner is an achievement in itself.

Our own sense of achievement in being able to run without collapsing in a heap and media interest in that experience is closely linked to international, and in this year Olympic, success. Coe, Cram and Ovett feed the public's imagination and fill a vacuum which is unlikely to be filled by our sorry apology of a cricket team . . . or football teams . . . or rugby teams . . . and so on. It is Coe's comeback after injury, the heart-rending scenes of Ovett's collapse in the sun, the young pretender Cram, that fill our screens and kept us up to the early hours back in August. The Zola Budd affair acquired a new plot that must have even astounded her hard-bitten backers at the *Daily Mail*, but her tangle with Mary Decker was unhappily allowed to obscure the achievement of Wendy Sly in winning a silver medal. The London Marathon's success also paid off at the Olympics with the British women's record being broken and the 1984 London champion, Charlie Spelding winning a bronze medal, our first

Olympic marathon medal since 1964.

At present, apart from the runners themselves, charities are the chief beneficiaries of the running boom. Over one-third of running events are linked directly to charities, but it is not just any charities. In 1983, the Muscular Dystrophy Group raised a staggering £121,770 from sponsored runners, and they were not alone; MENCAP, Multiple Sclerosis, Cancer Research and the British Heart Foundation all raised similar amounts. The charities then tend to be British, people-orientated (especially children) and concerned with disease and disability. However, in the last year, more traditional left issues have entered this sponsorship arena. The Crane brothers Himalayan run, which took on the mantle of another Great British achievement, raised money for Intermediate Technology destined for Third World countries. Greenpeace has spent a lot of money on advertising in the running press seeking active support. CND launched their 'Million Miles for Peace' campaign with specific appeals to runners. Whether the British sporting public's parochialism can be broken remains to be seen, but it is just possible that the emphasis in running on participation as opposed to competition, may open up some new avenues for intervention.

Probably the most interesting developments have taken place in women's running. Over recent years health and fitness, for women, have become inextricably linked. The popularity of dance led on to aerobics via the Jane Fonda style workouts and the obligatory jogging suit and leg warmers, and most recently weight-training has acquired new-found popularity. All of these developments have maintained sports' popularity and steered it well clear of its ill-deserved 'jolly hockey sticks' image. For me, the greatest performance of all at the Olympics was in fact achieved by a product of the women's running boom. Priscilla Welch only took up running four years ago. Yet in Los Angeles, at the age of 39, she ran a creditable sixth in the marathon, breaking the British record as she did so.

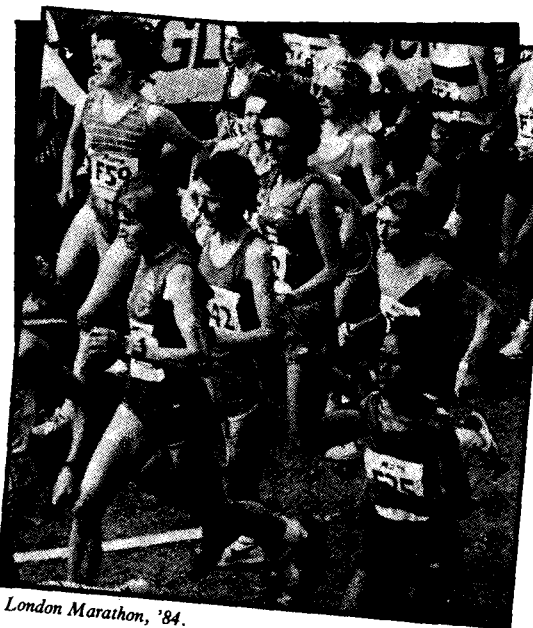
The running boom is now entering new areas of development, with televised city-centre road races likely to begin next year. The post-Olympics sports boom will continue for some time, helped out by the Christmas bonanza of awards for sports personalities. One of the most curious sights of the Olympics was that as the Americans cleaned up on the track, their

brand of sportswear cleaned up on the fashion-front. In wine-bars across the country it was off with La Coste, Fila, Pierre Cardin and on with the latest Kappa product.

Commercial interest in running isn't however limited to fashion. Mars Bar, the sponsors of the 1984 London Marathon, in particular have used the running image to spearhead their 'staying power' advertising campaign. The profile of sponsors thankfully remains fairly low-key, with Mars' pushiness in sending out training advice to all London entrants backfiring on the company. Their 'advice' included the tip of eating a Mars Bar as you run - as most runners knew or would soon find out, the only result would be nausea and sickness, hardly 'staying power'!

Clearly, for many hundreds of thousands of people running is an important part of their lives, and support for their sport from local government is warmly appreciated. But as the abolition of the metropolitan county councils and the GLC looms, and rate-capping begins to bite, few authorities will be in a position to offer much help. The sports editor of the *Daily Mail*, of all people, has already stated 'Sport has no firmer friends than the GLC and the county councils'. Chris Brasher has publicly expressed his fears for the future of the London Marathon should the GLC go.

Meanwhile the Government didn't even mention sport in its consultative document on the arts and recreation. If the county councils are abolished it is clear that the Government will be unwilling to make up for their ambitious, wide-ranging and largely non-elitist backing of sport.



London Marathon, '84.

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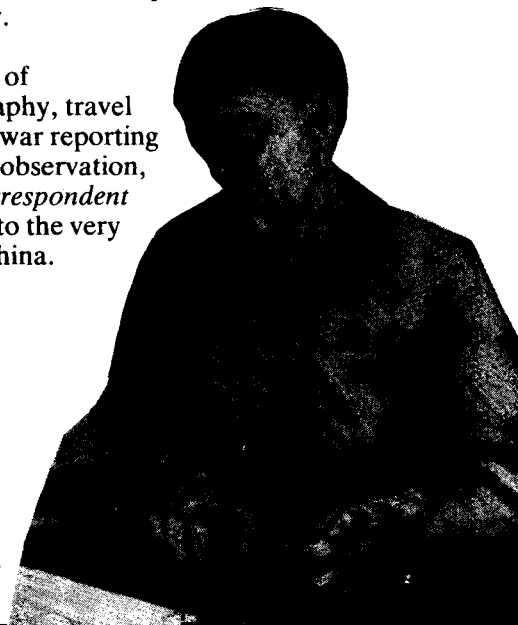
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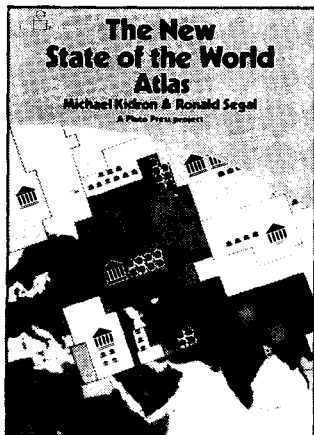
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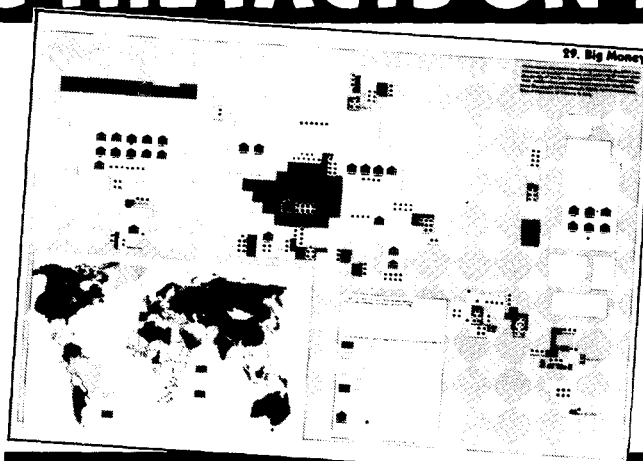


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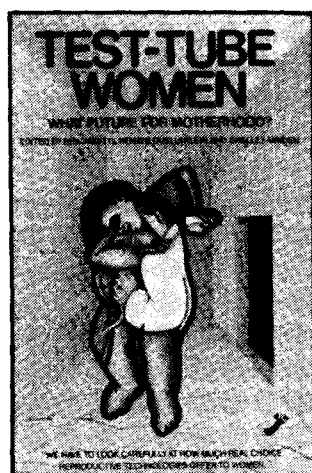
Pregnancy and Choice

Test-tube Women

Rita Arditti, Renate Duelli Klein and
Shelley Minden (eds) *Pandora* £4.95

Running out of Time

National Abortion Campaign 50p



Many of us are left reeling by reproductive technologies, confused by, but suspicious of, media images of happy and delighted parents with their technological miracle, a 'perfect' baby; it is all presented as a clear case of science being used for the benefit of man and even womankind. **Test Tube Women**, a collection of feminist essays about different aspects of reproductive rights is therefore at the same time both comforting and terribly frightening. Comforting, in that it clearly explains the different reproductive technologies that are being developed in language that is accessible, and strips reproductive technologies of the mysticism that only a few people holding knowledge can create; frightening in its analysis of who holds power, makes the decisions and has control of the boom industry that reproductive rights has become, and the implications of that for women.

In over 30 essays we are taken on a sometimes nightmarish journey where cloning and pre-natal femicide (the selective abortion of the female fetus) are taken out of the realms of science fiction and placed into the present; where sterilisation and contraceptive abuse are a daily part of women's lives; where test tube babies (*in vitro* fertilisation) are not the product of an altruistic male doctor's research so that women can choose to have a baby, but rather a step towards making women expendable in the reproductive process.

In her essay 'The meaning of Choice in

Reproductive Technology', Barbara Katz Rothman examines what choice means in a social context. She states that freedom of choice does not in itself create 'an ethics of reproduction': all our choices are socially constructed; society creates needs, the needs of women to become mothers, and then creates the technology to meet that 'need'. She argues that the issue is not whether or not some technologies empower, and others enslave women, rather that *all* technologies can *all* empower and *all* enslave depending on who controls the social system.

There are essays in the book which illustrate how technologies controlled by women can be empowering, most notably in the chapters on donor insemination and self insemination where the restrictions on AID through the medical system have been circumvented by feminists and have enabled women, particularly lesbians to conceive and have children and develop life styles outside the nuclear family norm. Indeed Nancy Breeze in her essay 'Who is going to rock the Petri Dish' argues that 'society wide involvement in the process of creating babies could structure a society wide responsibility for their care', noting that '2,000 years of morning sickness and stretch marks have not resulted in liberation for women or children' whereas, in a society that had different values, a substitute womb could.'

The book also presents us with the dilemmas and contradictions that reproductive issues present. Pre-natal screening and the use of tests to diagnose fetal disabilities in order to abort is one example. We are urged to look at the definition of disability that society forces upon us, and the fact that a decent health and social policy could remove women's greatest fears about bearing children with disability. This examination of the politics behind the search for a 'perfect' baby and the pain that women will endure to fulfill the role defined for them in a patriarchal culture is a theme which runs throughout this book and challenges us all to redefine what is meant by a 'woman's right to choose'. The book is certainly a first step in working towards a day when, in the words of the authors, 'female biology might mean choice — real choice — in a world in which women's different needs, interests and experiences are recognised and validated'.

Running out of Time deals with recent threats to the upper time limit on abortion. A joint subcommittee of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

(RCOG) and the British Paediatric Association (BPA), set up to consider a redefinition of perinatal mortality has also raised the question of fetal viability (the gestational age at which a fetus could survive outside of the mother's womb). This is now presumed to be 28 weeks, but the subcommittee has suggested that the time limit might be redefined.

NAC uses the RCOG survey on late abortions, published earlier this year, to argue against any change in the law which would make late abortions more difficult to come by. They argue that late abortions provide an essential safety net for women, and cite as evidence the RCOG report. This showed that a significant proportion of women having abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy had been subject to delays within the NHS, 50% were young women who had either not recognised their pregnancy or were too frightened to seek help and 15% were carried out because of fetal abnormality. Thus a reduction in time limits would not help those women in most need.

The pamphlet argues that if people were really concerned about reducing the very small number of late abortions (only 2% of all terminations are performed after 20 weeks), the way to do this would be through better provision of abortion services, day care abortion facilities, self-referral and sympathetic staffing within the NHS. However, there will always be a need for some women to have late abortions and if the RCOG/BPA subcommittee recommends a time limit for abortions the NAC pamphlet will be a useful aid in fighting a campaign against further restrictions of legal abortions.

It is interesting to look at the issues that **Test Tube Women** and **Running Out of Time** raise in the context of the split in the National Abortion Campaign at the end of 1983 from which the Womens Reproductive Rights Campaign (WRRC) emerged. The split came about because of differences over whether NAC should stay a single issue campaign or whether it should 'broaden out' and focus on campaigning on other reproductive rights issues as well. The women arguing for a reproductive rights campaign remained committed to a women's right to choose on abortion within a reproductive rights campaign, but argued that choice on abortion could not be isolated from other issues of fertility and childbirth. For many women the ability to take control of their fertility was not simply a question of access to abortion. As

no common ground could be found between the two views, NAC split into two campaigns, not without some bitterness on both sides of the divide.

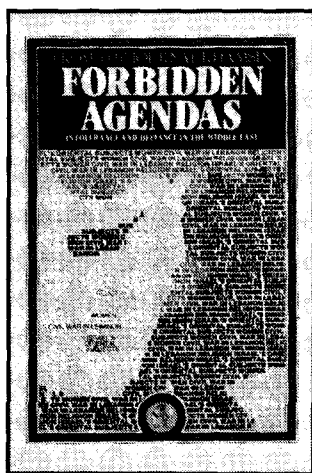
With recent developments in reproductive technology, and the widely publicised conclusions of the Warnock Report indicating that those technologies will be regulated in a way that puts a patriarchal society's needs as the starting point, rather than the needs of women, I am pleased that a women's reproductive rights campaign exists to articulate our demands. However, the vulnerability of our limited abortion rights and the latest threat highlighted in **Running Out of Time** demands that all the pro choice groups work together in what could turn out to be the most difficult campaign that pro choice groups have had to fight in defence of abortion rights.

Jan Mellor

A Voice in the Wilderness

Forbidden Agendas

Jon Rothschild (ed) *Al-Saqi* £6.95



The Left in the Middle East is having a hard time. Quite aside from the reaction prevalent throughout the region, the simple freedoms that make political discourse, not to mention political organisation and participation, possible are absent in most states. Communication across the barricades is well nigh impossible. An Iranian in Iraq is suspect because of his Shi'a religion; a dissident in Iran is confronted with the executions of thousands for lesser offences; Arabs in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states who are not citizens are subject to severe restrictions on their geographical and social mobility; a Lebanese in Beirut cannot cross to the other side of his or her

city without risk to life and limb; above all, Arabs cannot visit Israel, and Israelis cannot visit the Arab countries, save for Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco. Where, in these circumstances, does the physical space for mutual dialogue exist?

The answer, it seems, is in Europe. The journal *Khamsin*, founded in Paris in 1975 by a handful of exiles from Israel, Iraq, Iran and Lebanon, became a platform for those who believed that socialism, and the creation of an integrated socialist state encompassing the entire Arab East and Israel, is the only answer that will allow the region to escape from its backwardness and intolerance. Begun at the initiative of the Israeli socialist organisation, Matzpen, but broadened to take in many other contributors with a wide variety of views, *Khamsin* (named after the desert wind that descends on the Middle East in the late spring and early summer) also eschews easy formulations and leftist rhetoric that does not take into account the specificity of the region and its various communities, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Although originally read by a tiny handful of the like-minded, it has become a major forum for debate about the area, particularly since its move to London in 1978 when the language of publication changed from French to English.

This anthology of articles from the journal — the first of its kind — encompasses four crucial themes: Israel's Oriental Jews, the position of women, the civil war in the Lebanon and religion. The contributors are all from Middle Eastern countries — Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran and include journalists, political activists and academics, most of whom have a long history of involvement in the struggles within their own respective countries.

Sadiq Jalal al-Azm's essay 'Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse' is one of the most original. A controversial figure in his native Syria and a brilliant philosopher with works on Kant and other European thinkers to his credit, he is not afraid to speak out on some of the most sensitive issues of the region, as his *Critique of Religious Thinking*, first published in Beirut in 1969, demonstrated. Here he respectfully takes Edward Said to task, distinguishing between what he calls 'institutional' and 'cultural' Orientalism. While Orientalism in general separates the European world from Asia and claims superiority for the West, 'institutional' Orientalism is the result of European expansionism; 'cultural' Orientalism is a pseudo-scientific

approach that seeks to disguise its racist prejudices. Eliminating the first does not necessarily lead to the elimination of the second. A failure to make the distinction can easily promote 'Orientalism in Reverse', where leaders like Ayatollah Khomeini can practise the same kind of racism and intolerance, in the name of resurrecting the values of their portion of 'the Orient' over those of Europe.

The section on religion examines the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, the struggle for socialism in Iran and the rise of clericalism in Israel as well as Orientalism, while that on women vividly demonstrates the way in which religion and the modern variants of tribalism and clan solidarity — as well as Zionism's insistence on preserving women 'as the helpers of men, keeping the home fires burning while the men set out to build the brave new world' — have prevented one half of the population from achieving even the political space in which to argue their case. The lengthy section on Israel's Oriental Jews, which also includes studies on class divisions in Israeli society and on Palestinian workers in Israel, is particularly welcome: unflinching in its critique of the Left's hope in the late 60s and early 70s that the Oriental Jewish population would provide the main force for radicalisation in Israel, it shows how and why they are today the mainstay of Begin and Shamir's reactionary Likud party.

However for those who are mainly concerned with the Israeli/Palestinian dilemma, the concluding interview with the late PLO representative in London, Said Hammani, by Moshé Machover, a leading member of Matzpen, completed in 1975, remains required reading. Hammani makes clear his, and Fatah's acceptance not only of the right of Jews to remain in Palestine but also of their right to a national homeland of their own alongside a Palestinian state. For this he paid with his life, assassinated in 1978, presumably by the same elements responsible for the death of the PLO's Issam Sartawi, another Palestinian leader who encouraged a dialogue with progressive Israelis. Like Abu Nidal and others expelled from the PLO, the Sharons and Kahanes of today's Israel (who, alas, rather than being expelled from the body politic are actually participating in its leadership) have a vested interest in seeing that the dialogue encouraged by *Khamsin* is stifled. This volume, courageously published by Al-Saqi Books, beautifully produced and well edited, may

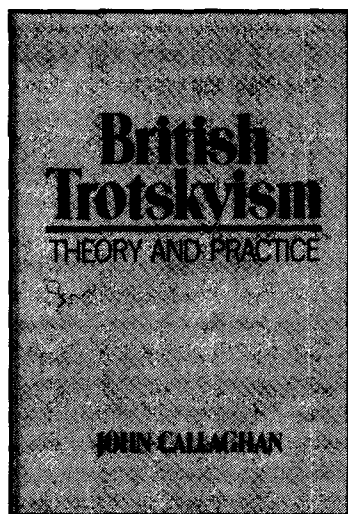
be a voice in the wilderness, but it is one of the few worth listening to in the Middle East maelstrom.

Pamela A Smith

Lenin's heirs?

British Trotskyism

John Callaghan, Blackwell £19.50



This thoroughly researched and well documented book looks at the ideology and practice of the Trotskyist tradition in Britain, and traces the history of the major groups from their common origins in the mid 40s. John Callaghan argues that the growth of radical political campaigns in Britain since the mid-60s has taken place at a time of decline in the influence of the Labour and Communist parties. But in the same period there has been a growth of Trotskyist groups.

The book outlines initiatives by Trotskyists in the trade unions and the role they have played in campaigns like Vietnam Solidarity, Troops Out and the Women's Liberation Movement. Callaghan argues that the far Left have played a crucial role in campaigns which may not otherwise have developed; but he also claims that 'its failure to be more than a mere catalyst of events is connected to its rigid adherence to a Leninist conception of socialist politics' which, especially in regard to the question of democracy he sees as 'defective, dogmatic and outdated'.

The rationale for the necessity of a Trotskyist party is the view that following Lenin's death, Stalin deformed the early Soviet socialist state and corrupted the communist parties attached to the Communist International. Trotsky and his fol-

lowers have been concerned to present themselves as true heirs of Lenin. The author argues that as the various groups have based themselves mechanically on Lenin and the Bolshevik revolution they have placed themselves in a political *cul de sac*. Catastrophic perspectives and a contempt for bourgeois democracy leads them to an analysis which often puts them out of touch with political reality. For example a Militant internal bulletin in 1977 predicted that in the next 10 to 15 years 'either the working class will be victorious and overthrow the rule of capital or we will have a military police dictatorship which will destroy the labour movement and kill millions of advanced workers, shop stewards, ward secretaries' etc.

Similarly excessive invective, as used by Lenin at times, has become a model for nearly all Trotskyist groups. In groups of such a small size, political differences dealt with in this way soon become personality differences inevitably leading to yet another split, and yet another Trotskyist sect, which on occasion grows into a group. This is illustrated in the appendix which shows that in Britain in 1944 there was only one such group, the Revolutionary Communist Party (of which both Ted Grant of Militant and Gerry Healey of the Workers Revolutionary Party were members) whereas today it is difficult to list every Trotskyist sect and group.

The central organisational problem for these groups has been how to form 'the revolutionary party'. The debate largely centres on entryism into the Labour Party. But the main argument has not so much been for or against entryism, but rather over the timing of withdrawal.

The most consistent entryist group has been Militant. Callaghan argues that although this tendency is very well organised it has been one of the least important factors in the move to the left of the Constituency Labour Parties in the last few years. In fact he suggests that the 'spontaneous influx of Marxism after 1979', combined with re-entryism by the Socialist League (formerly the International Marxist Group) will lead to Militant's weakness being exposed as a range of ideological alternatives appear in the Labour Party.

This is partly due to one of the dialectical problems of entryism: by its conspiratorial nature most Militant supporters can't join the organisation, and internal debate – if there is any – is deeply circumscribed. This leads to authoritarian leadership and

a lack of development of theory. Hence an outmoded organisation. Interestingly enough the only Trotskyist group which appears to have an impressive internal democratic structure (the Socialist League) has now re-entered the Labour Party. This group (then the IMG) came out of the Labour Party in 1969, but with the democratisation of the Labour Party they absorbed themselves back in the early 80s. It remains to be seen if this group can maintain its separate existence, and how the manipulative practices this involves will affect its own internal democracy.

This is a gripping book, bringing together many threads of Trotskyist theory, practice and personalities. Undoubtedly many Trotskyist groups are sectarian and fundamentalist (reflecting a tendency in all left groups in my experience). Many of their 'leaders' are absolute authoritarians who if they ever gained power would make Stalin look extremely liberal. But they have helped to develop Marxist theory to a degree, in the process forcing many Communist Party Marxists to be much more rigorous in their thinking and practice. They have helped to develop mass campaigns, some of which have been worthwhile. A number of them have carried out donkey work in broad organisations. But as John Callaghan points out Trotskyist organisations remain on the margins of British politics, and have not been able to surpass in influence what he calls the 'tiny Communist Party'. The author locates this failure primarily in Trotskyist pursuit of Leninist legitimacy. He cites the 'Benn heresy' – 'one of the oldest, yet most revolutionary ideas in the labour movement: that democracy demands socialism and socialism demands democracy' – and argues that it is necessary for Marxists to prove that Marxism represents the best recognition of this fact.

Callaghan is excellent when pinpointing the weaknesses of the Trotskyist interpretation of Leninism. But it is interesting that although Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and Luxembourg are often referred to in the book, Gramsci is not even mentioned in passing. The more creative development of Lenin's ideas in the European Communist tradition are not referred to. Thus Callaghan raises many interesting questions about Leninism and democracy but makes no attempt to offer answers. This means that although the book is an excellent critique, the author ultimately remains curiously detached.

Brian Nicholls



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● Barry Hugill draws some lessons from Tory education policies.

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BARRY HUGILL Breaking school rules



Brian Simon in his excellent article in last month's *Marxism Today* showed the enormous danger posed to working class children as the Government ploughs on with its plans to de-comprehensivise schools via a differential examination system and the 'new vocationalism' of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC).

He also drew attention to the successful campaigns to defend comprehensive schools waged by the parents of Solihull, Wiltshire, Berkshire and Redbridge and the abandonment by Sir Keith Joseph of educational voucher and student loan schemes. Professor Simon sees these events as major defeats for the Government and a demonstration of mass support for comprehensive education.

Yet at the same time as these 'defeats' were inflicted, private opinion polls commissioned by the Labour Party showed the Conservatives with a 15 point lead over Labour when respondents were asked which party had the better education policies. The polls were a shock to party workers who had long believed that education, with the health service, was one of the few areas in which the Tories were unpopular. They were wrong.

In fact, it was not the Government that suffered defeat but the remnants of the old Black Paperites gathered around a right-wing pressure group within the Conservative Party called the National Council for Educational Standards. It was a major setback for these people and one which the Left should warmly welcome but it was not a demonstration of popular support for comprehensives — far from it.

Vouchers and student loans were abandoned after pressure from DES civil servants and LEA education officers convinced Joseph that they would be an administrative nightmare. The campaigns of the Solihull, and other parents, against the restoration of grammar schools was based on that oldest of Tory principles — enlightened self-interest. They know that a selective system means that a lot of children fail, including, possibly, their

own. That the well-heeled residents of the shire counties have rejected selection is grounds for a celebratory smile but should not deceive us that we are any closer to winning the case for a genuinely egalitarian school system.

I have an awful suspicion that if, God forbid, a northern, working class, LEA, were to contemplate the reintroduction of grammar schools (and there are many on the Left who still believe that in a profoundly unequal society grammar schools remain the best bet for working class children) they would win a fair measure of popular support. The reasons for this are obvious — not all comprehensive schools are good and some are awful. The worst schools are invariably to be found in the poorest areas.

The Left can't have it both ways and argue, correctly, that the Government is hell bent on stripping state schools down to the barest essentials and then react in a defensive and hurt manner when the Fleet Street gutter sheets complain about falling standards. Of course standards have fallen — it would be miraculous if they hadn't. And for too many children they are at an unacceptably low level.

I know that Professor Simon was not trying to pretend that all was rosy, and in his article he referred to the enormous problems facing comprehensives. Nevertheless it is the failure of the Left to adequately challenge the Right over 'standards' that has led to the continuing dominance of reactionary ideas.

The problem for socialists is that talk of standards, excellence, and the like, has nasty elitist implications. By attempting to distance ourselves from the rubbish spouted by Boyson and his acolytes (not to mention some of the teacher trade unions) we have the impression that the Left is not interested in achievement. This is certainly the evidence of the opinion polls which show that people believe that Labour would sacrifice quality in the interests of greater egalitarianism. As Brian Simon says both the Labour and the Communist Parties have excellent policies on education but correct policies, as we know from bitter experience, are no guarantee of success.



Somehow we have to present the case for comprehensives in a form that is readily digestible. We need obtainable objectives not laudable, but vague, abstractions. For a start we should say what we are for at least as often as we say what we are against and it won't do to trot out the terrible jargon about 'a comprehensive system of tertiary provision', or 'an education that will enable all of our children to develop to the full . . .' Parents have a right to know what we intend for their children at the school down the road and that means talking about specifics like the curriculum, class sizes, out of class activities, homework and discipline.

Neil Kinnock, when he was shadow education spokesperson, came up with the notion of 'national minimum standards'. He wanted to place a statutory obligation on local authorities to ensure that all children were educated to a certain standard in the basic subjects (English, Maths, a foreign language etc); that to this end all children were guaranteed access to computers and other gadgets of the new technology and had the necessary textbooks and

1 Which cinema usher went on to direct Box Office hits?



2 Which two film directors directed Gone with the Wind?



3 Which war film was set on Brighton Pier and combined comedy, music, fantasy and slaughter and was directed by the Chairman of the British Film Institute?

4 What was the title of the first ever Talkie?

Who starred in it?

Who starred in the 1980 version?

5 Name the missing halves of the following famous pairs:

- a. Abbott and _____
- b. Astaire and _____
- c. Wheeler and _____

6 Which film to date is the biggest worldwide Box Office success?



7 Which was Graham Greene's first adaptation for the screen of one of his own works?

8 Which film theatre in London runs as many as 7 different programmes each day?

9 Which film has the famous Odessa Steps sequence?

10 Which Englishman went beyond the fringe to write An Englishman Abroad?

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CINEMA?



11 Which Western was based on an 'Eastern'?

12 Which musical films did the following songs come from:
a. Food Glorious Food.
b. Hopelessly Devoted to You.
c. Follow the Yellow Brick Road.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

13 Which 4 actors have played James Bond?

14 Bill Forsyth's first feature film was premiered at The London Film Festival in 1979. What was it called?

15 Where could you have recently been lectured by Sean Connery, Russ Meyer, A. J. P. Taylor and Graham Greene?

16 Who produced The Draughtsman's Contract?



17 Which film showed a paddle steamer being carried over a mountain?



18 Which film has been No 1 in the critics top 10 for the last 30 years?



19 Who appeared with Hitler and Marion Davis, among others, in this 1981 film?

20 In which cartoon film did a spider save a pig from being turned into bacon?

21 Who found Robin Hood, Napoleon, The Minotaur, S.S. Titanic and The Castle of Ultimate Darkness?

22 Who said "Remember, men, we're fighting for this woman's honour... which is probably more than she ever did!"



23 Who turned her owner from a college wimp into a Mr Chill?

24 What level of membership at the British Film Institute gives you a newsletter, an illustrated monthly programme, quarterly copies of Sight & Sound, allows you up to 3 guests, lets you use the extensive library, information department and stills library, and entitles you to make advanced bookings for The London Film Festival?

25 What level of membership to the British Film Institute gives you the chance to purchase tickets for the National Film Theatre and take up to 3 guests to performances?

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- ANSWERS**
1. Sylvester Stallone
 2. George Cukor and Victor Fleming
 3. Oh, What a Lovely War, Directed by Sir Richard Attenborough
 4. The Jazz Singer - 1927, Al Johnson Neil Diamond
 5. Costello, b. Rogers c. Woolsey (The Newts)
 6. E.T.
 7. Brighton Rock
 8. The National Film Theatre
 9. The Battle of Britain
 10. Alan Bennett
 11. The Magnificent Seven Based on the Seven Samurai
 12. a. Oliver b. Grease c. The Wizard of Oz
 13. George Lazenby, Sean Connery, David Niven
 14. Chariot of Fire
 15. The Journal of the British Film Institute
 16. The British Film Institute
 17. The Draughtsman's Contract
 18. Citizen Kane (source: Sight & Sound)
 19. Woody Allen in Zelig
 20. Chariot of Fire
 21. The Time Bandits - 1981
 22. Groucho Marx reuniting to Margaret Dumont in Duck Soup - 1933
 23. Christine (A 1957 Plymouth Fury automobile)
 24. Full Membership
 25. Associate Membership

laboratory equipment. He wanted a law to stipulate the maximum size of classes and to guarantee nursery provision for all children whose parents wanted it.

Sadly the idea was killed in its infancy by the local authority lobby within the Labour Party who were worried at the threat to local autonomy. Kinnock, well aware that the majority of shire counties and a few Labour controlled metropolitan ones are providing, and would continue to provide, a service well below his national minimum, intended to knock them into line by reverse rate-capping — local authorities not coming up to scratch would have had their control over education removed.

There is a threat to local democracy in the scheme and the danger of creeping centralisation cannot be overstated. Nevertheless it remains, to my mind, one of the few serious attempts made to relate to the aspirations of working people that their children should have the best possible education.

IQBAL WAHHAB and MARC WADSWORTH Black Sections



It was most timely of *Marxism Today* to take up the issue of Labour Party 'black sections' in its September issue. For, if constitutional changes paving the way for official recognition are won at the Labour Conference in Blackpool this month, black sections will have provided the biggest single political step forward for black Britons in recent history. Never before will a major political party in this country have taken its black supporters and members so seriously that it agreed to set in train a process which will result in real and credible power-sharing.

Significant numbers of black people have been in Britain since the 1940s, yet not a single MP has been elected from our ranks to represent us. But the lack of blacks MPs mentioned by Trevor Phillips is only the tip of an iceberg which stands as a monument to Labour's catalogue of failures when it comes to its one million loyal black voters. The iceberg is now being melted away by black activists themselves, not by internal 'white' forces high-up in the Labour Party hierarchy. Yet remedial action from within the party which purports to protect minority rights is a necessary precursor to such long-overdue change. A guarantee of black

representation to all its decision-making levels will, through black section accountability, ensure full discussion of the needs and aspirations of the black community. It will also make sure the leadership gets to grips with solid race policies which are not fudged but put into action.

Given that the leadership has never before had to justify itself to black people on the national executive committee or in the Parliamentary Labour Party, its attitude has smacked of deliberate ambivalence. Shadow Home Secretary Gerald Kaufman, deputising for Neil Kinnock who couldn't be bothered to turn up, manifested this approach to an alarming extent during an interview on Channel Four's *Black on Black*. He accused his black interviewer, Trevor Phillips, a former NUS president, of having a 'defective understanding' of how the Labour Party works. Kaufman used the very same words a fortnight later to describe a political commentator, Roy Sawh, of the *Caribbean Times* when black sections were again on the television debate agenda.

The Labour leadership's ambivalence is deliberate because they seem to believe that genuine power-sharing with black people in their midst would provoke an electoral backlash among white voters. But this insidious 'white backlash' theory, common also to the soul-searching among white liberals during the struggle for civil rights by black people in America, cannot be sustained. The argument is rarely given a fair test, so few are the black Labour Party candidates at general elections. On the face of it, the fact that 16 black candidates stood at the last election (six of them Labour), and none were elected could, to the casual observer, suggest some sort of racist backlash from voters. But, as Trevor Phillips rightly notes, 'no black candidate was selected to fight a winnable seat'.

What, then, is the Labour Party so scared of? After all, in the past it has taken a wholly unscrupulous line on the need for urgent measures to ensure increased black involvement in the party. This is because more than 80% of black voters have unwaveringly delivered at election time while demanding nothing in return. Black activists have since raised the leadership's level of awareness to the point that they are now warned: if there is no radical change it won't be too long before black people lose faith not only in the Labour Party, but in the political process itself.

The number of black people prepared to turn out for Labour is already on a slow but steady decline. Black electoral registration

continues to be less than white registration. All this implies an increasing alienation on the part of black people towards what is now viewed as Britain's totally white political structure. This is compounded by the lack of care and understanding given to the concerns of the black community like race attacks, police harassment, bad housing and double-digit youth unemployment.

Without proper political expression this frustration can turn into inner city violence as the uprisings of the summer of 1981 showed. No one would claim black sections in the Labour Party are a panacea, but they are part of a solution provided by black activists themselves.

So what are the drawbacks? The Labour leadership argues that it has no objection to informal constituency-level black sections being formed provided there are no GMC and EC delegates and no constitutional change. This is unacceptable to us. We want a copper-bottomed guarantee, enshrined in the party's constitution, that a place has been provided for an effective, organised black voice. We are too aware of the broken promises of the past to settle for anything less. Trevor Phillips portrays the problems in two ways; first, that support for black sections would lead to black members of unions calling for similar arrangements, and second, that our victory would be a 'personal defeat for Kinnock'.

When we discuss the trade unions, it is worth noting that 54% of black workers belong to them — 10% more than white workers — yet only 4% of black workers rise to elected posts in their union. Furthermore, while union membership is on the decline, it is the public sector unions like NUPE, with a heavy black membership, that are holding their ground. If, as a result of these equations, black workers decide they can best agitate for a better deal by caucusing they will do so (as the founding of the Black Trade Union Solidarity Movement in 1981 proves) whether or not black sections are given official recognition.

As far as Kinnock and a personal defeat is concerned, the Labour leader has himself to blame if he has painted himself into a corner. He still has time, though, to show true statesmanship and begin a direct dialogue with us. After decades of neglect there is lots to talk about. It is our sincere hope that progressives in the movement will rally to our clarion call. For the black sections issue at the Conference will be viewed by many people as a litmus test of how the Labour Party's new leadership responds to demands from its grassroots.

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EVENTS

- **Creche helpers wanted** for Left Alive November 3-4. Free day ticket for half days work in creche. Contact Mary Braithwaite, Left Alive, 16 St John St, London EC1, 01-251 4406.

BOOKSHOPS

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- **The Other Bookshop** 328 Upper St N1. Tel 01-226 0571. For all your radical, feminist, radical black and third world literature. Open Mon/Tues/Sat 10-6 Wed 12-7 Thurs/Fri 11-7.
- **Grass Roots Books** 1 Newton St, Manchester 1 (Off Piccadilly). Feminism, third world and socialist books (061-236 3112)
- **First of May Bookshop** 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh (Tel. 031 225 2612). Books on feminism, socialism, media, Scotland, 3rd world, etc. Send s.a.e. for booklists.

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Letters

3AD BUSINESS

As a critique of education policy under Thatcher, Brian Simon's article (*MT* September) was excellent. It suffered however from fallacious premises. Schools are not the main means of educating most of our children. Most children learn more of use to them) out of school—in the home, in their peer group, in the community, through the media—than in school. But the importance given to schools leads to the second premise, that all children should receive equal amounts of education. Because school has become a Godword in his century, we have arrived at a situation where most of our children waste vast amounts of time and state resources) sitting through lessons in subjects which for them are irrelevant, unwanted and unnecessary. If education was a business measured from its output and efficiency, it would have gone bankrupt years ago.

The argument (in spite of Brian Simon's interpretation) has never been that selection is bad therefore comprehensive schools are good because there's no selection. Of course children need to be selected to do things; they also need to choose for themselves. The argument is about the way in which selection takes place. The Left should be arguing: remove the chains; improve vastly the range of choice; allow children to choose how and where they want to learn; make education a community experience; identify the necessary but limited role for formal schooling.

A G Stephenson Plymouth

NO KNOWLEDGE

I agree completely with your policy of comment and criticism of all aspects of culture. However ill-conceived articles like

Simon Lockwood's on Elvis Costello (*MT* August) put this policy in reverse.

Lockwood deals with only four songs from three of Costello's nine LPs and, using these, brands him with 'self-obsessed, white boy, chauvinistic romanticism'. His comments would have been more credible if he had dealt with the wide ranging subject matter of the other albums.

Mr Lockwood also writes dismissively of the political commitment of Costello, although he was one of the few 'post punks' to show any form of political commitment whatsoever, with the honourable exception of The Beat, now sadly defunct. This is demonstrated by Costello's frequent appearances in political events from Rock Against Racism gigs to a guest appearance on Anti-Apartheid's recent single 'Free Nelson Mandela'.

Such an article serves to illustrate how many on the Left have little or no knowledge of popular music and popular culture, which Lockwood appears to link directly to the capitalist system.

Raymond Hill, London

SLAP ON THE WRIST

I would have preferred that the letter which appeared over my name in the September issue of *Marxism Today* had not been published.

Your editing converted a sharply polemical argument against Cde. Kelly, who was defending the Thatcherism fetish of *Marxism Today* over the past couple of years, into a mealy mouthed slap on the wrist.

Also, by omitting from my paraphrasing of the Hobsbawm analysis his use of the fall in Labour Party membership as well as electoral support, you were unfair both to Cde. Hobs-

bawm and to my apprehending of the basis of the 'Labour's lost millions' analysis.

Finally, I think it is wrong in principle to make cuts without consultation. I recognise the editor's right to reject a piece but not to alter it without the author's agreement.

Bert Ramelson, Sydenham

STUNTED MARXISTS

Whilst welcoming the opening up of *Marxism Today* in form and content, I am very critical of the lack of space given to exploring Marxist theoretical questions. You seem to have solved the many problems of Marxist Theory by abolishing it.

Questions of aesthetics, political economy, philosophy, history and science need substantial attention within your pages, with plenty of room for discussion. These are not high brow or marginal questions but of urgent and central importance.

Until Marxists build bridges in imaginative ways between their theories and the varied consciousness of people they will not make a significant contribution to the fight for peace, democracy and socialism. And our Marxism will remain stunted, rigid and narrow.

David Kessel, London

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Paul Fox is a journalist who has written about the US for many years. Maria Duggan is a researcher with the London borough of Camden's police committee support unit. Richard Henry is a lecturer in newspaper economics. Cathie Lloyd is a researcher for the Cities of London and Westminster Public Order Research Group and is a Communist Party branch secretary. Neil Kinnock is Leader of the Labour Party. Eric Hobsbawm was formerly Professor of Economic and Social History at Birkbeck College, London

and is a member of the *Marxism Today* Editorial Board.

Julie Sheppard is a TV worker and was involved in the making of Channel 4's current *Food for Thought* series.

Dexter Whitfield is a researcher/organiser with Services to Community Action and Trade Unions and author of *Making it Public*.

David Jenkins is the Bishop of Durham.

Andrew Heywood studied theology and is a member of the Communist Party.

Walter Easey is the secretary of the Hongkong Research Project based in London and author of *Ducking Responsibility: Britain and Hongkong in the 80s*. He is an ex-Hongkong police officer.

Pat Phoenix is an actress who for many years played Elsie Tanner in *Coronation Street*.

Tony Booth is an actor.

Rosalind Brunt is a lecturer in Communication and Women's Studies at Sheffield Polytechnic.

Richard Dyer lectures in Film Studies at Warwick University.

Tessa Perkins lectures in Film and Women's Studies at Wolverhampton Polytechnic.

Mark Perryman runs marathons and is a Young Communist League General Council member.

Jan Mellor works for the Abortion Law Reform Association and writes here in her personal capacity.

Pamela A Smith is the author of the recently published *Palestine and the Palestinians 1876-1983*.

Brian Nicholls is a Communist Party branch secretary and president of Kensington and Chelsea Trades Council.

Barry Huggill is an education journalist.

Marc Wadsworth is vice-chair of the Black Sections national steering committee.

Iqbal Wahhab is the author of the pamphlet *Writers on Labour* and is a researcher for the Black Sections national steering committee.

We welcome your letters for the November issue. They should be no longer than 250 words and arrive at the office not later than 5 October. The editor reserves the right to cut letters.

THE ALBANY EMPIRE

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NEWS

Beyond Poor Images A poster exhibition presented by Child Poverty Action Group is currently touring Bristol and Birmingham libraries. It is based on a competition to design images which challenged myths about the poor and pulls together some startling designs (many from young jobless). See it in Northampton, Manchester, Leeds or York before the end of the year.

A set of postcards (75p incl p&p) and a poster of the winning entry (£1.50 p&p) are available from Child Poverty Action Group, 1 Macklin Street, London WC2B 5NH.

Gays and the Police Force. Two initiatives have been taken to monitor how London's police force treats the gay community. The National Council for Civil Liberties is currently investigating how policing practices affect gay Londoners and welcomes feedback on this. Contact Sam Jenkins at the NCCL 01 403 3888 ext 33. 21 Tabard St, London SE1. Galop, an organisation set up to counter anti-gay attitudes within London's police force is also collecting information on police treatment of lesbians and gay men. Contact them at 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1.

CAMPAIGNS

Lesbians and Gay Men Support the Miners This organisation aims to raise the issue of the miners' strike inside the lesbian and gay community linking up the attacks by the police on the mining communities with the attacks on their own community. It also hopes to combat some of the negative attitudes which exist in sections of the labour movement towards lesbians and gay men. Contact Mark Ashton, L&GMSM c/o 39 Chippenham Rd, London W9.

When the Cameras Come Down What can we do about the media? 4 Oct (Thurs) Showing of two videos exploring how the media distort industrial disputes, organised by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom: *Making News* the story of the 1982 Health Service workers dispute and *The Lie Machine* current coverage of the miners' dispute, with speakers from the Barking Hospital Cleaners' Strike and the National Union of Mineworkers. 7.30pm Freemason's Arms, Long Acre, London WC2.



MEETINGS

Towards a Police State Policing the Miners' Strike 2 Oct (Tues) Fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference organised by the National Campaign Against the Police Bill. Speakers include Dave Douglas (Yorkshire NUM) Tony Benn and Louise Christian. 6.30 pm at the Pembroke Hotel, North Promenade, Blackpool.

The Reds and the Greens 11 Oct (Thurs) Discussion to examine traditional Communist aims in the light of the ecological challenge and whether environmental aims can be achieved without Socialism. Pete Carter (CP Industrial Organiser) and Jonathon Porritt (Friends of the Earth) 7.30 at Manchester Polytechnic Students Union, 99 Oxford Rd, Manchester.

Alternative Medicine 15 Oct. One of a series of seminars on science and politics sponsored by the British Society for Responsibility in the Sciences. Opening by Jeanette Mitchell (GLC) 6.30 pm Adam's Arms, 4 Conway St, London W1.

Europe's Third Road to Peace 25 Oct. Meeting to discuss prospects for a non-aligned Europe. Discussion to be opened by Jon Bloomfield. Dudley Library, St James Rd, Dudley. Details from Mark Perryman 0384 238216.

The hidden pathology of men; the role of medicine 29 Oct. The second in the Beneath the White Coat series of seminars organised by the BSSRS. Opening by Naomi Pfeffer. 8.00 pm at the Adam's Arms, 4 Conway St, London W1.

EVENTS

2nd Brum Peace Run 7 Oct (Sun) 1/2 marathon, 8 miles Fun Run takes place in Birmingham. Details and entry form from Jim Murray, 29 Upper St, St Marys Rd, Smethwick B67 5JR (send sae).

1984 Rights 'N' Revels 7 Oct (Sun) Benefit for and celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the National Council for Civil Liberties. Artists appearing include Susannah York, Miriam Karlin, John Hurt, Billy Bragg and the Raving Beauties 7.30 pm Aldwych Theatre, London.

Leeds Anti Nuclear Film Festival 27 Sept-17 Oct. At the Hyde Park Picture House until the 10 Oct and at the Trades Club, Saville Mount 11-17. Films include Atomic Cafe, No Nukes, China Syndrome, Coming Home, Children of Hiroshima, America from Hitler to Marx, Carry Greenham Home and many more. Evening and late night showings. Details from Jerry Lockspeiser, 0532 743057.

Left Alive Roadshow in Birmingham 2 Oct (Tues) Nuclear power and the miners' strike with a panel of guest speakers. 7.30 pm at the Star Club, Essex St, Birmingham.

Left Alive Social 13 Oct (Sat) with Antics Theatre Co, the Dudley Performance Group, music and food. Tickets £1.25 waged, 75p unwaged 7.30 pm at the Star Club, Essex St, B'ham. Further details from David Allen 021 692 1765.

CONFERENCES

History and Adult Education 6 Oct (Sat) Past Trends and Current Patterns. Discussion, introduced by John Holford, at this year's Annual General Meeting of the Communist Party History Group. 2.30 (Business at 11). All welcome. At Marx House, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1.

The Airwar has already started in Central America 13 Oct (Sat) Emergency conference organised by North London Central America Group. Speakers include Maxine Molyneux, James Dunkerley and Jeremy Corbyn MP. Pena with food. 11am-6.00pm at the University of London Union, Malet St, WC1.

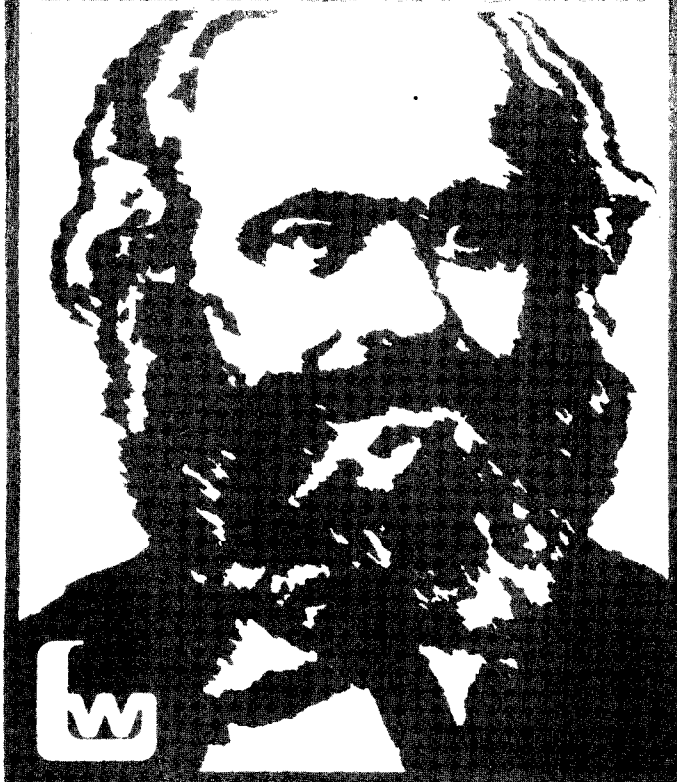
The Poor Law and Welfare in Hertfordshire 1834-1984. 20 Oct (Sat). A one day historical conference on the Poor Law of 1834 and its importance in the history of welfare. Speakers Mike Carpenter, Anne Digby, Peter Kingsford and Pat Thane. 10.35-5.00 pm at St Albans School, St Albans. Fee £2.50 (£1.00 unwaged) Details from Alan Hooper, 4A Wellington Rd, St Albans, Herts (send sae) St Albans 38325.

Literature and History Workshop 20 Oct (Sat) Organised by History Workshop Centre for Social History. Speakers include Christopher Hill, Marilyn Butler, Ian Wright. Fee £5.00 waged (£2.00 unwaged) Information from HWC/S, Ruskin College, Oxford 0865 56041.

Women and New Technology 6 Oct (Sat) Organised by the Cities of London and Westminster Trades Council. The conference will take place at Unity House Euston Rd, London N1 (NUR Building) 1.30-5.00 pm. Speakers include Veronica Bayne (CPSA), Julia Stallybrass (NALGO). Further details from Industry and Employment Unit 1-3 Charlwood St, London SW1 828 0393.

Entries for the November Update should be sent as soon as possible (latest date Friday 5 October) to Maria Loftus, Marxism Today 16 S John Street London EC1 or tel 01 251 4406 or 01-607 3344 (evenings). Space is limited. We cannot guarantee the appearance of your listing. However a booking in our new classified section will guarantee entry in both classifieds and update. For details see page 47.

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